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February 24. 1913 - August 3. 191#

Outlines of lectures that were delivered before th#
Harvard Menorah Society

Monday. February 24, 1913

Religion is primarily a social phenomenon..To grasp its reality, to observe its workings and to further its growth we must study its functioning in some social group. The individual and his development or perfection may constitute the sole aim of religion, but the fact and substance of religion cannot cxist completely and exhaustively in an individual. We may for purposes of discussion consider the religion of an individual human being; we may be interested in the logical and psychological elements implied in it, but when we do that, we are arbitrarily cutting a piece out of the reality, and not studying the reality as a whole. We are in the habit of associating concreteness with individual things rather than with groups. The particular fox-terricr that happens to be our house-pet appears more concrete than the special dog.

But while this is. the case with things that are objects of the senses, the very opposite holds good of matters that are the objects of thc mlnd. Whatever concreteness these latter may be said to possess, depends not upon how intensively they exist in this or that indivldual mind, but upon how extensively they are

distributed. Universality is a guarantee of the concreteness of an object of the mind, or perhaps identical with it, as individuality is a mark of concreteness of an object of the senses. A mental object begins to gather reality or concreteness the moment it establishes a relation between two minds. Religion, like government and language, cannot even begin to be real with less than two minds. The two minds must, of course, be coordinate, in the sense that whatever the relation established between them be, it could, logically, speaking be reversed. Religion docs not begin when an individual human being enters into relationship with a god; there must first be at least two human beings.

Religion as a social phenomenon is a form of the living energy which exists in all social groups. Whether nominalists be in the right with their view of general names as merely collective nouns, representing no reality other than that of the individuals included within those names, or the realists be right with their notion whereby they affirm a reality behind each collective noun, is immaterial in a discussion of the life of society. When we speak of society we do not mean simply a number of individuals that have some attributes in common as we do when we make mention of a term that denotes a spieces, but we imply a certain real and definite energy which is generated by the action and reaction of various individuals upon one another. Social life is not merely a metaphorical expression. It denotes a form of life no less real than that of any individual organism. This living energy which we

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There are two kinds of institutions and values, viz., those in terms of the members of the group themselves, and those in terms of a point of reference which lies outside of the particular group in which the social life manifests itself. The former class of institutions and values are political, the latter class religious. The religious aspect of the social life or energy expresses itself in those values which are usually termed moral or spiritual. From the distinction which is thus drawn between political and spiritual values, we can infer not only wherein they are different but also wherein they are similar. The point of reference upon which we make the distinction to hinge is all important, but not sufficient.——>

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to make us overlook the fact that moral and political values have much in common. Moral no less than political values must be regarded as subject to the natural laws of matter and mind, and as limited to the criteria of social utility. A value is no longer moral the moment it ceases to be socially useful. Even if it have the effect of satisfying some individual, enabling him to live life more fully, it is unmoral if it results neither in good nor in ill to society and immoral if it is positively harmful. No matter what we believe as to the relative position of society and individual whether we regard one or the other as the end and purpose of life, moral values can only be estimated as to their rightness, if we regard society or social life as the sole aim to which everything else is a means. In considering moral values we may lay the utmost stress upon the need of aiming at perfect individuality, but even then it is only as a means towards perfect sociality.

I do not want to be misunderstood. I do not agree with the Utilitarians who assert that the only content to the term "right" when used in an ethical sense is social utility. The untenability of their position has often enough been exposed. The unavoidable tendency which is characteristic of this school of thinkers, to smuggle in the terms "high" and "higher" in connection with utility, points to their logical failure in attempting to make social utility exhaustive of the ethical or moral character of a value. The adjective "higher" has its source in the distinguishing feature of all moral values, namely, the point of reference, and expresses the same fact in another way, and that is that the sanction the "oughtness", or the absolute character of these values is conceived in terms of an imperative coming from a form of existence larger than the society to which those values are applied, and embracing that society within itself.

Thursday, February 21, 1952

The Positivists, for instance, who in urging the sanctity of moral values, address themselves to Humanity, with a capital "H" derive the characteristic feature of moral values ffom the whole of human society, which is larger than any group with which any individual person may knowingly interact, larger, therefore, than any group that has it in its power to enforce the observance of these values. If moral values were purely utilitarian, they would be only co-extensive with the possibility of enforcement. The moment they pass in applicability beyond that, their essence must be found in something else than in utility, and in associating them with Humanity, that condition is, to a considerable degree satisfied.

One step further is taken by those Ethical culturists who, instead of writing Humanity with capital, write "Duty" with a capital, and profess the religion of Duty. These are not satisfied with limiting the sanction of ethical values to Humanity, but prefer to view duty as cosmic in character, embracing the entire universe. Of course, Theism is most explicit in drawing attention to the need of placing the sanction, which it now terms authority entirely outside of the individual whim or even social utility. It is true that in its zeal to emphasize this characteristic phase of the spiritual values Theism has often overlooked the limitation to which they are nonetheless subject, and has advocated their observance even when they were positively harmful. This, however, is only an accident which should not disturb us in the attempt to formulate logically the case of moral, ethical or spiritual values. But the main idea in all this discussion is that behind all moral and spiritual values there is definite phase of social life, which for want of a better term, we designate religion.

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Sunday, March 2, 1913

If we will learn to identify religion as that form of social energy which is responsible for moral and spiritual values, we will abandon all attempts to formulate a definition of religion. What we may do is to look for its expressions and manifestations both in the individual and in society, but as for the substance of religion itself, nothing less than the exercise of intuitive sympathy will enable us to recognize it. We must ourselves share in that social experience which leads to the articulation of values that claim to derive their sanction from a source outside of the social unit, if we wish to realize what religion really is. As a phase of social experience, religion is a living thing. As it is futile, therefore, to get at the innermost reality of any living thing by arriving at the common denominator of the various changes through which it passes, so is it a hopeless task to get at the heart of religion by merely searching for what is common to all the forms and expressions that go by its name. Thus to grasp the essence of religion involves, as has been pointed out in connection with reality in general,"a change of psychological front," "an inner catastrophe," a change of mental viewpoint similar to that which takes place when looking upon a chessboard, we suddenly see black squares on a background of white squares, instead of white squares on a background of black squares.

Now, to apply this conception of religion to Judaism. We see at once why such definitions of it have been current since the imauguration of the Reform movement must prove unsatisfactory. All definitions of Judaism which give as its essence the belief in one God and the furtherance of righteousness are bound to sound threadbare. If, after all, such a definition helps us little toward getting at the distinctive features and individuality of Judaism of what use is it as a definition? If may serve its purpose if what we are

after is edification. But, if we aim at clear thinking we cannot but feel that the boundary line between Judaism and Unitarianism, or even devout Ethical Culturism, is very faint. What logical place in any such definition can there be for segregation on the principle of race? Why not invite unqualifiedly into our fellowship all who subscribe to these elements of the definition of Judaism instead of limiting ourselves princip ally to Jews? Shall the distinction between Judaism and Unitarianism consist in the refusal on the part of Judaism to receive the Christian Redeemer into the list of heroes? This would reduce the content of Judaism to a mere negation.

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Monday, March 3, 1913

The only way in which we may hope to conceive the nature of Judaism as to be helped in our attitude towards it both from a logical and practical point of view is to bear in mind that it is nothing less, and if you will, nothing more than that phase the social or ethnic experience of the Jewish people which has given rise to a number of moral and spiritual values. "Experience" is here used to denote the psychio energy involved in experiencing, and not the product of such energizing. The terms "moral" and "Spiritual" are not to be taken as entirely synonimous. While both kinds of values are social in character and derive their sanction from without the social group, moral values hold the social wellbeing clearly in view and aim directly at it, while spiritual values serve social wellbeing indirectly only, by fortifying the moral values in one of two ways, either by drawing attention to the point of reference which gives the character of moral to the moral values or by cultivating the reactions both outward and inward which result from this attempt to contemplate the point of reference. The spiritual values of any religion will therefore be comprised within its theology, which

tries to make explicit both the nature of the source of the moral sanctions as well as our relations to that source. The belief in the unity and personality of God is one of the spiritual values of Judaism, so also is the prohibition of representing God by the image of any existing thing, which prohibition is a reaction resulting from Judaism's view of God. On the other hand social righteousness is the name for the system of moral values in Judaism. But neither kind of values, alone, constitutes Judaism, nor even both together for Judaism is primarily the ethno-psychical energy which has produced them both. (This "ism" in Judaism should convey the same meaning as in the term magnetism.)

In accordance with this view, the permanence of Judaism does not necessarily involve the permanence of its moral and spiritual values, but the continued identy of the ethno or socio-psychical energy capable of producing such values. This ethno or socio-psychical energy is an ultimate fact and need not furnish any justification for its existence. Like every form of life and energy it has to hew its way through a great many dangers and besetting forces of destruction, in its case, both inanimate and human. In this struggle for existence it naturally shows the tendency to defend itself by means both psychic and physical. What has preserved the Jewish ehtno-psychical energy has been its inherent power to produce the kind of moral and spiritual values which rendered all hostility powerless. In this respect at least, the struggle for life on the part of a socio-psychical force is analogous to that waged by all living forms. If the polar bear survived, it was because it had the necessary fur for the climate, and the necessary strength for procuring its food. Moral and spiritual values are the kind of horns which social forces evolve. While, therefore, the continuance of the social force is an ultimate, and, as it were, an absolute fact,

the same is not the case with the values which it evolves. Whether they are the right kind of values or not can only be determined in one way, and that is by testing their efficacy in preserving the social force which has given rise to them. If they do not make for its preservation then they must give place to those that will, and such a change will be effected so long as there remains any vitality in the socio-psychic force.

This is open to misunderstanding. What has been said of moral and spiritual values may be interpreted to imply that these values have only a relative and not an absolute worth, which was the position taken by the Sophists. This however is far from our thoughts. We must not confuse in speaking of moral and spiritual values form with content. The form of these values, that which gives the name moral and spiritual to them, their "oughtness", must be conceived as nothing less than eternal and absolute. But in considering the content which we wish to clothe with this "oughtness" or absolute character, we have no other means at our command to guide us except the power of preserving the social energy that begets them. This function which such values must possess and which we may name their "rightness" helps us to know whether we should retain the content, or substitute some other content in its place, as the thermometer is a guide in regulating the heat of the room, though it is not responsible for the fact that 70° is the normal temperature.

The problem which confronts the Jew who has become conscious of his relation to Judaism by reason of a change in environment calling for readjustment is a twofold one. In the first place he must make up his mind whether he would have the Jewish ethno-psychic energy that still lingers in him -- for this is implied in the very fact that Judaism is still a problem to him -- die out completely or reenforce itself so that it might continue to live. Secondly,

having made up his mind that he will live as a Jew, the question arises as to what are the moral and spiritual values best calculated to further such life. This elucidates the error of the Reform movement in Judaism. It has either ignored the first part of the problem, or if it was brought face to face with it, as in the question of inter-marriage, it was uncertain and equivocal in its pronunciamentos, at times even favoring death in order to live. It has identified Judaism with the quintescence of the various moral and spiritual values of Judaism and has made the values the end and the life force behind them the means. The question behind the adjustment which gave rise to the Reform movement has not been as it normally is in all forms of life, how least to compromise with the individuality undergoing readjustment, but how best to fit into the environment. Not that the latter question is illegitimate, but emphasis upon it to the neglect of the former is certainly illegitimate.

Judaism canot not exist without the Jewish people. This which we have shown to be the case from a logical point of view has been quite amply demonstrated by the failure of the Reform movement. Not even the best friends of the movement can gainsay the fact that there is a marked want of content, a painful vacuity to Reform Judaism. The occasional relapses into a longing for the traditional ceremonies are symptomatic of this same feeling of hollowness. But no haphazard experimenting will lead to any permanent adjustment of Judaism to the modern environment. The work of adjustment must be begun all over again, in accordance with a method growing out of a clear understanding of the nature and substance of Judaism.

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Wednesday, March 5, 1913

What Arnold says of God will, if changed around, serve as a definition of Judaism. "God," he says, "is the Power that makes for righteousness - not ourselves." "Judaism," we may say, "is the power in ourselves that makes for righteousness.

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Thursday, March 6, 1913

By the phrase "makes for righteousness" we should understand that Judaism has the tendency to evolve those moral and spiritual values which have endowed it with remarkable power of resistance.

Bearing in mind the distinction made above (p.8) between moral and spiritual values, we may now put the question What are the moral and the spiritual values?

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Sunday, March 9, 1913

In order to determine what these values have been it would not do to undertake a random search for them. They must necessarily be corrolaries of one general and all inclusive value, if they are to be in any way interconnected.

Does it appear then that we must inevitably return to the method of Reform Judaism which consists of striking a sort of common denominator to the various values, and arrive once again at such abstract principles as the unity of God and the brotherhood of man? Will that which we have thrown out by door come back through the window?

This will by no means be the case if we adhere closely to our purpose which is that of finding some all embracing value that has had this quality of supplying the ethno-psychic force or the Jewish consciousness with the power of resistance. The value which

is to possess this quality must be one which evaluates the social group itself and not one which merely states some general truth about God or that which lays down some general law with regard to human society as a whole. That there is but one God is a truth which intrinsically endows no more power of resistance to any social group than the truth about conic sections. The ethical teaching that all men constitute one brotherhood can no more keep together any social group than the more ~~xxxxxx~~ concrete ethical teaching that the strong ought not to oppress the weak. What we therefore mean by certain values endowing the Jewish ethno-psychic force with vitality is that they are either themselves evaluations of the Jewish ethno-psychic force, or are the application of these evaluations.

Another precaution we must make mention of is that we are not at liberty to construct any fanciful evaluation of our own. The question before is "What evaluation has given vitality to Judaism?" and we must, therefore, keep strictly to historic truth

Israel, the chosen People- ** * * * *

Monday, March 10, 1913 (on train to Boston)

~~The one evaluation which satisfies all of these conditions has been that Israel is God's chosen people.~~ Historically, it was this conviction (Being Chosen People) which exercised incalculable cohesive influence upon the Jewish people. It was solely by force of this belief which had been instilled and drilled into them by the prophets that they were able to meet the shock of exile and reorganize as a people. Of course, this belief was bound to become more deeply rooted the moment it exhibited its efficacy, and the age of the second commonwealth is marked by a more detailed and intensive application of this principle to the entire life of the people than there was a call for at any time during the period of the first commonwealth. Ever since then, throughout the centuries of the Diaspora, their

conviction and its logical accompaniment that God would restore Israel to its own has been responsible for the spirit of martyrdom which the most humble was ready to display when called upon to abandon Judaism. It would be interesting to enter into a psychological analysis of martyrdom but for the present we must content ourselves with pointing out that at the bottom of the martyr's act is the vivid picture of himself in the attitude of surrender to the physical force of his oppressor, an attitude which he can not but contemplate with disgust because it involves not the suppression of some abstract truth but chiefly the extinction of his own personal worth. To be one of the chosen people was a mark of distinction which augmented the personal worth of each Jew in his own eyes. To such an extent was this true that he felt he could afford to overlook the ~~xxxxxx~~ upon him by the world around him, just as any person of distinction would hardly take umbrage at being hooted by street hoodlums. To be offended involves a certain amount of worth possessed in common by both offender and offended.

(Whatever else "worth" may involve, it certainly implies self-comparison with an ideal of oneself which is already accepted as a norm, or concerning which there is the conviction present that it will be accepted as a norm.)

The next step is to determine whether the Jewish people regarded itself as chosen in and for itself apart from any further consideration or because of its actual or possible conformity to a type which it considered worthy? In other words, did this belief amount to a sort of unreasoned national conceit, or did it imply the contemplation of a general type which it was approaching or at which it had arrived? Did the Jewish people rise to the contemplation of an abstract type apart from its actual and present self? If there can not be the slightest doubt that this was the case,

since the very chequered nature of its career was bound to impress upon it the realization of departure from the type, all that we have to do in order to get at the general value from which all the moral and spiritual values were derived, is to define the type of society which the Jewish people believed itself destined to realize. What that type has been may be stated as follows: a society or social group with all the opportunities for social and economic interaction that exists in a geographic group, knowing itself as constituting a society not by reason of propinquity, but by reason of God's commanding or sanctioning those of the laws which make for its life and wellbeing. Generalizing this description of the type of social group to which the Jewish people claimed to own a closer resemblance than any other people, we may state that the general value or norm which Judaism has evolved, and which reacted as a preservative influence upon Judaism has been that the only true society is the one which, subject to the natural causes making for social interaction, regards as its true organizing or constitutive factor not any of these natural causes, but the point of reference whence moral and spiritual values derive their sanction.

Judaism thus assigned to God an entirely different function from that which any other of the ancient peoples assigned to their deities. While the deities of the nations served to furnish the sanction to the moral and spiritual laws, they never were regarded as the sole organizing principles or factors of social groups. The social group was a given fact. There was no further analysis of the social organism. This was in line with such a conception as that each social group was

This new function which was assigned to the God of Israel was at the root of the strongly felt yet vaguely grasped truth that the God of Israel was unique. It was not his oneness that our fathers were

first impressed by, but his uniqueness. In fact that declaration of ~~xxxxxx~~ Judaism which we have taken to be the slogan of monotheism was originally the war cry of the uniqueness of God. ( )

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Tuesday, March 11, 1913

Perhaps nothing proves so clearly that the Jews were conscious of worshipping a God that was unique as the strenuous opposition to all forms of imagery. If I am not mistaken this prohibition is without a parallel in any of the other religions, and it therefore argues a distinct realization of the new way in which the character of God was conceived. It was not intended to emphasize the "spiritual" character of God, if we understand by the term ~~xpxix~~ spiritual merely the negation of anthropomorphistic qualities. The deprecation of anthropomorphism is practically unknown in the Bible. Not the slightest hesitancy is displayed in speaking of God in the boldest human terms. Hence we must look to some other reason for this relentless antagonism to images, and it appears quite plausible that attributing this function of God as the organizing principle of the social group was responsible for it.

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Thursday, March 13, 1913

To this singular apprehension of the nature of God is undoubtedly due the moral fervor and enthusiasm which has made Judaism the mother of religions. The will to righteousness cannot be assumed to have been primary from which the conception of God was the derivative. Such might be the logical, but it certainly was not the historical order. People theorize about God before they theorize about themselves, and while it is true that their theory of God will be fashioned after their own image, the fact remains that the theory of their own relationships and mode of life will be tacitly derived

from the accepted notion of Deity. In the case of the Israelites, who thought of God differently from the other nations, the attitude towards the laws of social life was of necessity a different one. As with the other nations, so with the Israelites these laws were regarded as having come from the Deity. But a wide gulf divided the Israelites from other nations as to the relation of these laws to the Deity. The other nations viewed that relation as extrinsic and accidental just as they regarded the decrees of their rulers. The Israelites, however, connected God with his laws in an essential and intrinsic manner, as though his very nature realized itself to the full in giving those laws. God himself was the Lawgiver, not Moses. The latter is represented as having been made the lawgiver at the request of the people, but even then he was not to come in that capacity, but only as mediator did he "set the laws and the judgements before the people." We may behold in this the significance of the revelation, which is also without a parallel in the traditions of the other nations. Such a tradition could only have arisen as a result of viewing the relation between God and Israel in the manner described. Of course, the proof yielded by the ~~xnqx~~ unique story of the patriarchs, the sojourn in Egypt and the redemption is the more evident and convincing one. The entire purpose of these traditions is nothing else than to prove the truth of that which is summarized in the song of Moses in the words "He made thee and established thee."

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Sunday, March 16, 1913

Out of this unique relation between God and Israel arose the new meaning which the prophets gave to social righteousness. It has always been felt that social righteousness received a new emphasis at their hands but inorder to get the full significance of that emphasis it is necessary to look beyond the unique genius

of the prophets. A casual glance at their writings will convince us that they were not more ethicists who worked themselves up into a frenzy about social righteousness per se. The majesty of the "thus saith the Lord" is never dimmed in the slightest by the shadow of a suspicion that we are dealing with a cant phrase. Since God was Himself the bond of unity and stability of His people, the laws that made for justice and order were the very expression of His nature, the very manifestation of His character, and the sole means by which He served as the uniting force. Every violation of these laws was, therefore, practically a denial of His power and a challenge of His very character. Hence oppression and injustice were for the first time in human history denounced in accents which bespoke a conception of God that was destined to become the basis of true religion for mankind.

But the prophets are by no means the only ones in Israel that exhaust the significance of that new relation between God and social order, which Judaism has pointed out to men. The Lawgivers are animated to the same conception, and translate it into detailed laws and observances. Of these laws there are many which mark an application in a directon only touched upon now and then in the prophetic writings, in the direction of sexual purity. To the Lawgiver, sexual purity no less than social righteousness is surrounded with a hege of laws which prove a degree of solicitude no less intense. Its violation is given as that which made the conquest of the Canaanites possible, and its maintenance is stated as a prerequisite of the continued stay of Israel in its land. Why the laws of chastity should thus have risen to the same level of importance as the laws governing the civic order becomes apparent if we consider that as the latter were calculated to enable the people to live well, the former helped the people to live long. Long life in a race or social group has always been felt to be conditional upon self-

restraint and purity in sexual matters.

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Sunday, March 30, 1913

Judaism threatened by Democ. + Science

The problem of Judaism is inherently the problem of how it is to meet modern life. No solution of this problem can be considered complete which fails to take into account the two elements that contribute to modern life, and which are bound to be elements of danger to Judaism so long as they are ignored. These are democracy and science. Democracy threatens the integrity of the Jewish social group. It tends to disintegrate the very social organism which is the bearer of Judaism and without which Judaism is inconceivable. This effect democracy exercises not by means of its doctrine of liberty of equality but by means of its fundamental principle of government, that the unit of political life is the individual, and that a nation is solely a group of individuals, and not a group of groups. The so called new nationalism in this country with its emphasis upon federal as opposed to state domination is the corollary of this notion of democracy. The only kind of subdivision that democracy will tolerate appears to be one based on geographical lines and on no other. In face of this tendency Judaism will only be able to hold its own by creating social institutions which, while not interfering with the working out of that principle of individualsim in the domain of political and economic life, will prevent it from encroaching upon the domain of the religious life. If those who wish to live the religious life find it impossible to do so without some form of social institution, for democracy to oppose that social institution is to uphold the principle of individualism at the cost of individual liberty and to become just as tyrannical and persecuting as any ~~tyrannical~~ despotism.

Democ. ↓

This demand for social institutions was never so urgent before the days of democracy, for the simple reason that they were in existence all the time. During the entire period of Jewish history as far down as the emancipation period, the Jews were segregated as a separate social group, and enjoyed some form of social autonomy. When they prayed for a return to their land, they prayed for that which was comparatively a luxury since existence was assured so long as their social autonomy was intact. The return to the promised land meant of course a happier and unmolested form of existence. Under those circumstances, the wishbone was not converted to backbone. It was only when, in the 19th century it became plain that the spread of the new democratic and national movement was fatal to the very existence of the Jewish people, that the wish to return to Palestine began to be entertained as one that sought immediate satisfaction and would not be put off with mere visions and dreams of a distant future. I am not speaking this from the standpoint of the Zionist, but from the viewpoint of the one who realizes the inseparability of Judaism from the Jewish people. It is not merely as a nationalist aspiration but as a religious demand that the Jew looks forward to the establishment of a center where the existence of the Jewish people is assured, and this can only be the case where they constitute the predominating element.

Yet the position of that Jew would be untenable if he were to confine his religious strivings to the establishment of a group of which there is not the immediate prospect that he will become a member. The wildest visionary does not entertain, nowadays, the dream of an Israel gathered from the four corners of the earth into the land of Palestine. The vast majority will want to live as Jews everywhere. While, therefore, the stimulus emanating from a Jewish spiritual center will contribute largely to the maintenance

there will always be a diaspora.

of Jewish life in the Diaspora, it will require the existence of distinct social institutions to take it up and convert it into living energy. First and foremost among these social institutions is a Jewish education completely dominated by the aim of fostering as much of Jewish social life to serve as soil for the religious life as is feasible in democratic countries. The emphasis upon Hebrew as the language of instruction is one of the means of creating a distinct social atmosphere. Every other element that is to enter into the process of education should likewise be calculated to make of each Jewish center and institution in the Diaspora a Jewish socializing factor.

The other element in modern life to be considered is science. Needless to say, we do not mean that any particular one of the special results attained by scientific research is a source of danger to Judaism. It is rather the entire cast of the modern mind. Those who give the tone to life of the present day have become imbudd by categories of thinking which seem in their very nature opposed to the spiritual values of Judaism, those values whose function it is to keep vividly and distinctly before the mind the source of sanctions to which all moral values are referred.

Before taking up the spiritual values in their relation to the scientific spirit of the day, it is necessary to state more clearly what is meant by the point of reference or source of sanctions lying outside of the particular group which is conceived by the moral values thus sanctioned. If that point of reference is conceived as being beyond and above the physical universe it is a deity or god, whose nature is thus regarded as transcending any known form of existence. In common with the other religions, Judaism acknowledged the transcendent nature of its God. But in contra-distinction to other religions, it gave new direction

and significance to the doctrine of God's immanence. This it did as we have seen, by consciously accepting God as the organizing factor of the social life. But while Judaism's characteristic contribution to religion consisted in the doctrine of divine ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ immanence, it did not abandon that which was fundamental to and in common with other religions -- the transcendence of God. The God of Judaism is one who is above as well as in the world. But His being a God in the world was due to His being a God above the world. The moment God is merely identified with the world and conceived as being immanent but not transcended, His divinity is denied and He is dissolved into the world. This is the atheism and Pantheism which religion so vigorously contends against. It will only verify the analysis we have suggested of the true character of the moral values and of the "ought" as being derivative froma source of sanctions beyond the social group to which these values are applied, to learn that in a system of logical Pantheism such as Spinoza's there is no room for any "ought." That which is is what ought to be. Religion while not always clearly recognizing this danger in Pantheism, instinctively felt it and has insisted upon the transcendent phase of God being brought into prominence.

Let us reduce if possible, the terms transcendent and immanent to lower and more concrete elements. After all, in employing them we are using metaphorical expressions borrowed from the concept of space. But if we wish to think clearly we must be as literal as possible in our mode of speaking. Furthermore, if we wish to take sides with one or the other, we have to be clear as to the issues involved between the transcendantelists and the immanists. The line of demarcation is emerging more and moredistinctly between those who on the one hand attribute both transcendence and immanence to Deity and those who, on the other hand, allow only ~~xxxxxxxxx~~

immanence. As for transcendence solely, that has seen its last together with Paganism. In spite of the apparent similarity between modern Paganism and ancient Paganism, there is this radical difference, that while ancient Paganism placed the deities entirely outside of the world, modern Paganism being more philosophical, places the Deity completely within the world. But the question remains upon what is the distinction between these two factions of the thinking world based?

That distinction appears to be based upon the admission or exclusion of a particular category of thought, namely, quality. If we recognize that the category of quality is not relative but absolute, is not merely quantity having reached a certain point but something altogether distinct from quantity, then we necessarily assent to the notion of transcendence. For all that we imply by God's transcending the world as well as dwelling within it is that from the very fact that He is immanent, from the very circumstance of His being the sum of the world's energies and substances, He is more than the world, since out of the very quantity arises something that is more than the sum of the elements that go to make up the quantity namely, quality. God being in the world necessarily leads to God being beyond and above the world as well.

But, surely it was not on the basis of such a distinction that the emphasis upon the transcendence of God has been insisted upon in Judaism. There have been in Judaism definite spiritual values calculated to illustrate the transcendence of God. These we wish to state and after having done so we shall determine whether they may still be accepted or if not acceptable whether they are to be entirely rejected. This will lead us to the question and method of revaluating the spiritual values of Judaism.

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Monday, March 31, 1913

In Judaism as in all other religions the transcendent character of God was considered as established by reason of certain miraculous manifestations whereby the ordinary course of events was broken into. On the basis of the tradition that God sent plagues upon the Egyptians, divided the sea, revealed Himself on Mount Sinai it was a comparatively easy matter to enforce the moral laws which were urged in His name. But what is to be done at the present time when we can no longer accept the account of the miracles as historical? Shall we sweep away all such stories into the limbo of legend pure and simple?

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Thursday, December 11, 1913

Abstract of Lecture delivered at Baltimore before the Beth Hamidrah Society on Sunday, December 7.

We are on the threshodl of a new era in Jewish life. Of this we have a sign in the awakened interest in the various Jewish educational endeavors that have as their object not only the particular commuminites in which they take their rise, but Jewish living throughout the Diaspora. The society to which I address myself undoubtedly shares that interest. That being the case I feel that it would not do to give a detailed picture of the process of religious training as carried on in the past and contrast that with the way in which it is carried on in the present. The difference must be emphasized in such a way as to define for us the problem that faces us at the present time. For this purpose it will be necessary to hit upon some striking characteristic or new element which modern training in religion contains and which was not known before. This condition is fulfilled by noting that all of Jewish religious training is shadowed by the question "To what purpose?" while at not time

in the past was such a question even considered. To bring up children religiously was a naturally assumed duty, which everyone felt called upon to perform to whatever extent it was possible for him to do so.

How can we account for the presence of the question? An understanding of what is involved in educational work will supply the answer. Education is a twofold process. On the one hand it is the adjustment of the individual child to his environment. On the other hand it is a process in which the social group engages in order to have the child that is born into it carry on its life. Both elements must be present for the work of education to function normally. This at once makes it clear why we are at the present time troubled by the question "Why educate our children Jewishly?" Evidently because we lack at the present time a definite social group for which the child is to be educated. The problem of Jewish education is thus only a corollary of the problem of Jewish life and another phase of the question: Is Jewish life worthwhile? Since we are dealing here practically with an ultimate, we may find it more advantageous to attempt to silence doubts by changing the very circumstancesthat have given rise to them than by formulating any formal or theoretic reply. In the same way as the question"Is life worthwhile?" is better dealt with by so stimulating the health of the person that asks it, than by attempting to prove theoretically by means of argument that life is worth living. Since the occasion which has given rise to the question as to the value of Jewish religious training has been found to be the want of Jewish life that shall serve as background, the right way to silence that question is to create a distinct Jewish social environment. The only way in which this may be done is

1. By organizing all educational endeavors so as to reenforce the Jewish consciousness.

2. By transmitting the content of Jewish training as social institutions and not merely as source of religious ideas.

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Sunday, December 14, 1913

Abstract of three addresses delivered at Newark on November 8, 22 and December 13, 1913

The aim of religious education must be defined in terms of the social group that carries on the work. As such, religious education is the process whereby the group strives to have the individual that is born into it perpetuate and enrich its life. The group carries the expression of its life and genius. The work of education consists of the various organized and unorganized efforts to initiate the child into these institutions, so that the more he enters into their spirit the more he becomes identified with the spirit of the group. Thus when the Passover ceremonies are gone through by the parent, the object is to arouse the curiosity of the child, which is satisfied by a narration of the chief experience of the race. In this way the institution of the Passover is a means of conveying the race experience which is to become also the experience of the individual.

It was in this spirit that the Bible was in former times taught to the child. The Bible was not a book but an institution. The process of teaching aimed directly not so much at inculcating the individual truths or practices mentioned in the Torah as developing that regard for the Torah which it was expected to receive as a sacramental institution. Sacred Scripture as an institution is therefore not only the written word but the written word plus the evaluation that Israel has given to it. We may take as an instance the coin which bears the government stamp. As a rule it is seldom worth in bullion the amount which the stamp indicates,

but it is the power of the government represented by that stamp that gives the coin the full value it represents. In this sense the coin is an institution. Similarly the Scriptures are not to be estimated merely for their bare content but for their content as interpreted by the Jewish spirit throughout the different ages.

It was only because Scriptures and particularly the Torah was an institution that Judaism arose and has maintained itself. By the rise of Judaism I mean that self-conscious religion which our people first began to live when they returned from Babylon. Attention is seldom called to the unparalled change in attitude toward idolatry which took place among the Jews in a comparatively short time. From an unsuccessful struggle against idolatry waged by the greatest of the prophets both immediately before and during the exile (Cf. Jeremiah and Ezekiel) we meet with a thorough and permaent sweeping away of all idolatry and idolatrous practices on part of the people after the exile. I believe that nothing can so well account for this remarkable change as the institutionalizing of the Torah by Ezra. The human being is institutional by nature, that is to day, he must establish a certain kinship in spirit with his contemporaries or ancestors by means of symbols or institutions which point to such kinship. Idols, as a matter of fact, were held in favor principally for their institutional values. If Ezra had not given the Jews an institution in the Torah, they would certainly have relapsed into idolatry.

In the same way was the Torah a means of maintaining Israel's life. If Ezra made an institution of the Torah, Rabban Jochanan ben Zacai even made it more so by making all the national traditions and practices emanate from the Toray and by establishing an academy for the cultivation of its study. Just as in Ezra's time the Torah made the natural demand for idolatrous representation unnecessary,

so did its further elaboration at the hands of Ben Zacai and his successors render the sanctuary and priesthood dispensable.

In strong contrast with this institutional attitude towards the Torah is the one that is tacitly assumed in all present day religious educational practice. The Torah is no longer treated as the main institution of Judaism but as the chief source of religious teaching identified with Judaism. Insofar, however, as the institutional sanctity of the Torah has departed, the religion, which has found it its main support is in a precarious condition. This change in attitude is undoubtedly due to the two causes, social and intellectual, which are transforming if not destroying Jewish life completely. The intellectual cause, however, can be met and should be met as it historically has been, by interpretation. Interpretation began with the moment the Torah became an institution (Cf. [illegible] and the call for the interpretation of the constitution.) In that case, of course, it was to meet the exigencies of life that the Torah had to be interpreted. But later on, particularly in the age of Maimonides, the need to interpret arose from the change in intellectual viewpoint. It is the same today.

Since interpretation implies giving that rendering to Scriptures which its contents receive in the light of the Jewish spirit that has raised them to an institution, it can not be an altogether arbitrary affair. There are certainly some general principles which have crystalized themselves more or less consciously in the course of time and which should serve as the standards of the correctness of interpretation. The following are some of the principles:

1. Differences in degree of sanctity and the assignment of primary significance to the Torah. As a source of religious teachings there can be no intrinsic reason why the Torah would be more sacred than the Prophets or the Psalms. But as institutions such

a distinction between the different parts of the Bible is intelligible. This traditional conception of the Torah is synonymous with the term authority. The Torah was considered most authoritative and to be in harmony with the Jewish spirit it must still be considered such and taught as such. Thus the notion of authority of the Torah which on the one hand seemed so indispensable to traditional Judaism and on the other so opposed to modern notions of individual liberty, may continue as an active concept of Jewish life, in view of its interpretation as institutionalism. (This is also the inner significance of the concept revelation.)

2. The Torah conceived of as a unit. Whatever may have been the history of the various elements that go to make up the Torah, the Jewish spirit has undoubtedly welded them into one institution animated by a unitary principle consistently carried out. This unifying tendency is particularly evident in the numberless instances where contradictions whether apparent or real, are removed by means of all possible inventions. If the contradiction is in the narrative part, some other events are conceived as having occurred which explain the disparity; if in the laws, some differing circumstance is read in.

3. The Torah is theocratic. This applies both to the narrative and legal parts. In the narrative parts the object is not to hold up any human character or human deed to admiration, but the ways of God. The stories are told in the spirit of the 105th Psalm.

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Monday, December 15, 1913

Suggestions made at the meeting of the Morris Blumental Society last night (Sunday, December 14, 1913)

The discussion turned upon the question of environment. I suggested that the problem before us that of creating an environment.

On the principle that religion is only possible where you have a social group that has some interests in common besides religion. Judaism must have a group of people who have some social interests in common. Hence the duty of the Jewish minister is no less that of building up/the social and communal life of his people than to give them the religious teachings and conceptions of Judaism. In order to do that he must be a student of the workings of social forces in human life and have a clear idea of their effect on the religious life. He can no longer afford to brush aside as negligible the question of industrial changes and their effect in having withdrawn people from religion. Furthermore, he must strive to make of the synagogue a social center.

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Sunday, January 4, 1914

In the course of a conversation I had with Abraham Cohen, a former pupil of mine, in reference to his attendance at the services of 85 Street synagogue, while my wife and I were paying him a visit, he claimed that it was impossible for him to derive any spiritual benefit from the kind of services held there. He said that if I were to hold services on Sabbath mornings at my house, he would be glad to take part. When I declared my willingness to act on his suggestion he became so enthusiastic that he made efforts to interest a number of young men in the project. But he went about it so blunderingly that I immediately had to extricate him from a swamp. He asked a young man by the name of Ike Davis, a poppish ~~xkxxrk~~ sort of chap, to join the group. The latter, fortunately, refused on the ground that with the accession of young Herbert Goldstein to the pulpit it was his duty to support him. I certainly endorse this sentiment of young Davis. And I may add that one of my motives in urging the congregation to take Goldstein as their

minister was that through him the sheep might be divided off from the goats. He for the goats and the goats for him, and if Ike Davis isn't a goat his father surely is.

When Abe Cohen saw me after his talk with Ike Davis, I suggested to him to have nothing to do with any one that was eligible as one of Goldstein's followers. I approved, however, of the two other men he got interested in the project, Lawrence Crohn and Elisha Friedman, both honest and clear thinking young men. I from my side promised to interest Julius Draxler, who claims that his having come in contact with me has completely changed his attitude to Judaism from cold indifference to one of enthusiastic devotion. I also deemed it advisable to have Abe Cohen's father, Joseph H. Cohen, identified with the group. Not that I expect to influence him in any way, but because he has a keen mind and will act as a buffer to some of the wild tendencies in thought that are sure to break out from time to time.

Thus it came about that yesterday I had to rush from the Unterberg home where I was enjoying a good meal and pleasant company after a sermon that I delivered at the Shearith Israel Synagogue - Central Park West and 70th Street, to meet the group that I expected to come together for the first time. I was wet and cold. I did not expect anybody, least of all Joseph H. Cohen who is not a strong man physically. His son came half an hour later. The following transactions took place.

I opened the meeting with a few remarks on the purpose of our weekly gatherings. It will be our aim to get a clear understanding of the Jewish problem, and arrive at what we might deem the proper solution. This is to be a work of years. It will involve, in the main, the examination of the problem from two aspects, the one that of Judaism, the other that of Jewish life. The first

aspect is that which deals with the problem as it affects Jewish thought and belief, the latter involves the adjustment of Jewish action which is inhibited by one form or another of conflicting social environment. In order, however, that we realize all the time that we are not discussing the problem as mere dillettante, but as Jews vitally interested in the preservation of Judaism and the Jewish people, we will have the appropriate service read at each of the meetings. Without further ado I read the Mincha service omitting the Kadish and Kedusbah, as we had no minyan.

As we were getting ready for the discussion of our problem, Joseph H. Cohen, found fault with the manner in which I read the service. He objected to it on the ground that I chanted it in the major key of the German Jews. He claimed that it would be more in keeping with the Jewish spirit all over the world to chant them in the minor key of which he gave an illustration by singing the "Ashre" in accordance with the Polish Minhag. The rest of us could see no reason for emphasizing all the time the tragic aspect of Jewish life to which he replied that we should never lose sight of our abnormal situation. I urged that it was a sign of heroism to ignore present ills and acclaim our faith triumphantly instead of always bewailing our fate. Friedman pointed out that the Hasidic movement was intended to make Judaism joyous instead of sad. J.H. Cohen replied that for that reason Hasidism xx has failed. He could hardly have meant it but this is evidence of his delight in argument for its own sake. I replied that there have been more important contributing causes to the failure of Hasidism. Friedman began expatiating upon the nature of those causes when J.H. Cohen reminded us that all the tunes of the Hasidim were in the minor key, a most striking fact in view of the professed aim of the movement to make Judaism a religion of joy. We dropped the discussion at this point because we were anxious to begin from the beginning and we were sure

that there would be room for the discussion of Jewish music after we have become clear in our minds as to first principles.

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Monday, January 5, 1914

The following was the question with which the discussion opened: Wherein does Judaism come into conflict with modern thought? The proper answer to this question requires that we seize the essential tendencies with which each is respectively identified, and if our general impression that Judaism is somehow at variance with modern thinking be correct, these two tendencies should prove diametrically opposed to each other.

J.H.C. - It seems to me that Judaism demands reverence for the past, while present day thinking would pay no regard to the past.

Crohn - The conflict between Judaism and modernism centers in the Bible, which Judaism would have us accept as authoritative, while modernism has torn it to shreds.

Draxler - In my opinion it is necessary to draw a distinction between the two strata of the people to whom Judaism appears as out of harmony with present day thought. One is the very broad stratum of the masses of men and women who are not at all clear as to the nature of the conflict, but who blindly accept the judgments and catchwords of the upper layer of the thinking few. With the latter class, however, the difference between Judaism and modernism is mostly due to the conception of evolution which has become part of the intellectual man's mental furniture. The most prominent idea in Judaism seems to be that God everywhere intervenes and directs the course of existence and this is vigorously contradicted by our way of viewing the world as a gradually evolved product.

MMK - Are not these pairs of contradictory ideas that have thus far been suggested namely reverence for the past ~~xxxxxxx~~ versus irreverance, acceptance versus rejection of the Bible, and even divine intervention versus evolution rather the corrolaries of a more fundamental opposition?

Draxler - Of course the evolutionary conception of the world goes back to a view of God which Judaism would not countenance. According to Judaism God is outside of and transcends the world, while evolution knows only of a God that is immanent.

MMK - Shall we accept that the conception of God is at the bottom of the conflict between Judaism and modern thought? Before doing so, however, let us observe the nature of the struggle for existence which religion in general seems to be waging. It may be that by doing so we shall have a clearer notion of what is involved in regarding the conception of God as the crucial issue.

J.H. Cohen - The problem of Judaism must be studied by itself in total disregard of the general religious problem of the day.

MMK - Why not deal with the problem of Judaism as we deal with any object that we seek to comprehend? Do we not resort to the comparative method every time we have the opportunity to do so? It may be that by viewing the problem of Judaism as a particular phase of the problem of the spiritual life of the rest of the world that we shall be able to arrive at some definite conclusions. We must admit that Judaism has a great deal in common with other religions. Why then, isolate the problem of Judaism as though there were no similar problems in the world?

J.H.C - Our interest in Judaism is far too intimate to allow us to study it in that cold objective fashion.

Friedman - I agree with Mr. Cohen. Judaism is with us a prejudice and we may state right at the outset that whatever conclusions we shall arrive at will be favorable to Judaism. Hence, why clai.. to be discussing it in a dispassionate and logical spirit?

Draxler - I strenuously object to such an attitude. It seems to savor of a cynicism which more than anything else, has prejudiced the young against Judaism. (Here Draxler bent over the table and shook his finger at Friedman and his face flushed).

MMK - In all this discussion we have for the moment abandoned the main question that we put to ourselves, as to the crucial issue.

Draxler - It is a question of method and one we must decide on before going any further. In a way the method has a great deal to do with the conception of the world and of God which is as I have said at the basis of the conflict.

MMK - This is true. The tendency to regard Judaism as unique and sui generis is a sequence of the limited and narrow conception of existence, which broke up the world into separate compartments each ruled by its own laws. Present day thinking requires that we regard all phenomena as presenting a certain basic unity and similarity with one another.

J.H.Cohen - When a physician considers the case of a patient very near and dear to him he cannot assume the objective attitude of the stranger. Here we are trying to find a way inwhich to save our mother, our Judaism. How can we study it as outsiders?

MMK - You are excellent in the use of analogy. But we shall have to rule out analysis from our discussion. There is always some nigger in the woodpile.

Friedman - I still maintain that we are governed in our conclusion by prejudice. It is therefore useless to assume that we can be objective.

MMK - I think that if each of the contending sides were to consider what the other wishes to emphasize there would be no occasion for divergence of method. The truth of the matter is that our prejudices and instincts color our abstract judgments, and that when we seem to be coldly logical we are, none the less, giving way to our innermost demands. I would not put the matter, however, quite in the same way as Friedman and Cohen state it. The person whose thinking is of any value is the one that does all in his power to repress these prejudices to such an extent that he is convinced that there is a certain degree of objective truth to his conclusions. For this purpose I have suggested the study of the problem of Judaism in the light of the general problem of the spiritual life at the present time. A comparative study of that kind will give more objective character to our conclusions with regard to Judaism. This is the point at which the meeting broke up. J.H. Cohen read the Maariv.

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Tuesday, January 13, 1914

Perhaps the term that will best describe the method of interpretation that I am attempting to work out is pragmatic in contrast with the allegorical method on the one hand and the historical on the other. The historical method of interpretation proposes to reconstruct the meaning which was consciously in the mind of the writer; the allegorical method ascribes to the writer meanings which the reader arbitrarily wishes to find in the words of the writer; the pragmatic method is concerned with the effect that the words of the writer had on the inner life of the people, or with the way what he said worked. The allegorical method is most limited in its value. Its importance is in revealing the mind of those who used it rather than that of the writer. In the mental life of a person even the dream possess a certain degree of reality.

So in the thought life of a people, the arbitrary allegorical interpretations possess reality in the sense that they give us an insight into the word outlook of the interpreter. The historic method possesses the dignity of truth for its own sake. Whatever may be the effect upon our most cherished beliefs we cannot sacrifice to them the knowledge of the truth. But the truth which the historic method reveals is very limited in scope. It reveals to us only a cross section of the stream of thought that has been coursing through many generations. The pragmatic method however, seeks to identify the direction which the thought first formulated by the writer has taken. It tries to get not at static truth but dynamic truth. It is this method alone which is of actual aid in the religious life of a people or group. For what we are interested in religiously is not what was said at one time or another but whither is the religious life tending. As justification for the application of this method to Israel's sacred literature we may offer the fact that the outstanding characteristic of the religi us life of the past is expensiveness. As G. A. Smith so well points out, "the rapid moral growth of early Israel never runs away from the character of the national God. Other ancient nations achieved ethical progress at the expense of their religion. (* * * *) Their gods were left behind and laughed at as the conscience of their worshippers devoloped. But JHV H was never found wanting by Israel and never discredited by any new conception of truth or by any strange experience in their history." Let us go a step further and ask ourselves what rendered the religious life of Israel so expansive that no amount of growth of the moral conscience rendered the old concepts and institutions entirely obsolete. It can only be due to the fact that even the oldest concepts and institutions contained in potential form the latest developments, that they were the responses to psychological demands that hold good of

the religious life in all the different stages of its development.

The statements checked in the margin of the previous page offer the best reason for not abandoning Judaism for ethical culture.

Last Saturday afternoon the discussion as to the nature of the conflict between Judaism and modern life was continued. Present were Elisha M. Friedman, Draxler, Lawrence Crohn and Abe Cohen. In the course of the conversation preceding the discussion I gave expression to an idea with regard to the Jewish people suggested by ~~xxxxx~~ McDougall's description of consciousness. In his book on Social Psych. McDougall maintains that the one essential feature of consciousness as distinguished from purely mechanical action is the reaction to resistance. If mechanical action meets with resistance that is greater than itself it simply yields, while consciouness will find a way of overcoming that resistance. By applying this test to the Jewish people it becomes evident that of all groups in ancient and present time the Jewish people possessed the element of group-consciousness to the highest degree, since obstacles that put an end to the existence of all other groups only called forth greater resourcefulness on the part of the Jewish people.

In the discussion proper I made the point that both the religious and the social problems of Jewish life were specific phases of the grest spiritual problem of the present day, namely the one of individualism.

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Sunday, January 25, 1914

Abstract of Lecture delivered this morning before Jewish Institute at Kessler's Theatre.

Subject: What Has Zionism done for Judaism?

Zionism, in the first place, has suggested the best possible solution for the question: "Why remain a Jew?" namely, to remove the very causes that give rise to such a question. To understand what these causes are it is necessary to examine more carefully the conditions which make possible the existence of religion in general, for, after all, it is not Judaism alone which is threatened but all religion. To what shall we attribute this religious unrest? Shall we lay daim to a mentality so far superior to that of our ancestors that we can afford to regard with contempt all that the past had produced in the way of religion? The truth is that the cause of the religions unrest is to be traced to the great transformation and redistribution which is going on in human society everywhere. Old populations are dissolving, new nations are forming, new political entities are developing. Now in order to realize in what way this redistribution of society is bound to affect the religious life of mankind, it is necessary to bear in mind that there is one indispensible condition which must be fulfilled for religion to be at all possible, and it is this: that religion can only exist in a social group the members of which possess something else in common besides religion. It may be race-consciousness, a common history, a common nationa life, economic interests in common, or a culture to which all are attached and from which they draw their spiritual nourishment. It can not, of course, be said, that all of these elements that the individuals of a group may have in common are of equal value. For instance, race-consciousness is a very uncertain element subject to modification wherever intercourse with other races is

possible. Similarly common history and traditions depend upon an efficient educational process in which the past is made sufficiently vivid and at the same time related with the present. Neither of these elements, therefore can compare in force and vividness with the uniting influence of a common nationality or culture because these are present interests.

As an illustration of the way in which religion manifests itself we may use the instance of a flame that inheres in a wick the strands of which are saturated with oil. Analogous to the flame is religion which is the loftier enthusiasm that is generated by social life whenever it rises to the realization of the need of higher sanctions than those which its own immediate interests dictate. But such an enthusiasm cannot exist abstracted from a real social life, upon which it feeds. Analogous, therefore to the wick is the society and to the oil which establishes action and interaction among the strands we have an analogy for the common interest other than religion which must unite the group. Given however a case where part of the wick is saturated with oil and part with water, the flame will sputter and leap instead of burning steadily and will finally go out altogether.

All this as applied to Jewish life means that for Judaism to exist and thrive there must be a Jewish group united by something besides religion. And insofar as Zionism has been seeking to create this something it has been preparing the ground for religion and thus assuring a future to Judaism. With the fostering of an element like common nationality in Palestine, or of a common culture on the basis of the Hebrew language, the very ground and cause for the question why remain a Jew will be removed.

This method of dealing with the question is far superior to the one suggested by the Reform Movement. The Reform Movement has attempted to subdue all doubts as to the value of Judaism by pro-

posing the mission idea. Such an idea can be of no more avail than to attempt to cure pessimism by means of learned dissertations on the truth of the optimistic view of the world. Such mental depression is due, as a rule, to poor health or to lack of work, which when supplied, erase the doubt as to life's worth completely from the mind.

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Monday, January 26, 1914

Furthermore, Zionism furnishes us with the best guide in solving the problem "How shall ~~xx~~ one be a Jew?" Here too its mode of approach is far superior to either that of Reform or of orthodoxy. Reform counsels elimination from Judaism of all elements that are at variance with the spirit of the age. The latest result in the department of human thought and achievement is to constitute the guiding principle. Thus, if the last word in historic research denies the authenticity of certain traditions, these traditions should give way before the newly discevered truth. Or, if the latest tendency is to depreciate ceremony and symbol it must find corresponding expression in Judaism by reducing ceremony to a minimum. This mode of solving the problem "How live as a Jew?" has resulted in robbing Judaism of its distinctive character, in reducing it to a weak imitation of the prevailing faiths and non-faiths. Judaism in that way gets lost in the crowd of religions and tends to disappear entirely.

On the other hand, Orthodoxy knows of but one solution to this second problem, and this is to maintain traditional beliefs and practicies at all costs. Neither the demands of both reason and comfort must be suppressed as illegitimate. Loyalty to the past is exalted as the chief of virtues. The fact is, however, that this uncompromising attitude is nothing less than suicidal, for the result of blind stubbornness is continual ~~xxxx~~ loss of members and constant thinning of the ranks of loyal adherents to Judaism.

Zionism advises us to pursue quite a different method in attempting to solve the question. It calls upon us to become thoroughly imbued with the principle and workings of the soul of the Jewish people and in the basis of such knowledge with the Jewish spirit to work out the problem before us. Once such knowledge is attained the rest can be left to us. We shall neither sacrifice the essentials of Judaism to such an extent as to destroy its individuality, nor make it so unbending as to break under the severe strain of modern thought and life. The solution offered by Zionism as compared with that of Reform or Orthodoxy may be illustrated by the following: a clock which has gotten out of order and to which different attempts are made to set again in order. There is more than one foolish person who believes that by constantly keeping the hands moving the clock will begin to keep time of itself. Others again, with a certain vague perception of the important part played by the pendulum will set the pendulum to swing to and fro for a while. To be sure the clock, in this second case, will seem to be in good working order for a while. The familiar tic-toc will be heard once more, and the hands will actually move though not exactly in accord with standard time. But this is only transient, and it is not long before the clock is once again at a standstill. The only wise procedure, of course, is to take down the clock and look over the mechanism. After arriving at a knowledge of the principles upon which that mechanism is constructed, and discovering what is wrong with it, it is possible to get the clock to work and keep time without stop. In like manner it is futile to attempt to live a Jewish life by constantly altering the outward expression in the form of belief or practice so as to have it conform with the latest fad among our neighbors. Neither will the momentary revival of the familiar tic-toc of tradition be of much avail. The only way will be found

when people will realize the inner workings and spirit of the Jewish people when its sould both in the past and in the present will become manifest to the Jew. This joined to an eagerness on his part to have that Jewish spirit continue in him and in his descendants will, when regulated by the enlightened opinion of large number, furnish a definite guide to Jewish living. This way of living Judaism necessarily involves a complete change of psychological ? (p.44) with regard to the very nature of Judaism. It involves turning away from the mere shadow of Judaism and facing its substance, beholding Judaism not in any one doctrine or sum of doctrines but in the innermost life force which has vitalized the Jewish people and has made of it the most self-conscious social group of any upon the face of the earth.

Finally, Zionism supplies us with a conception of the place of Judaism in the religion of the future. By carrying out the simile of the clock one step further, it will be possible to gather what that conception is. One often hears on the victrola a record known as the chiming of the clocks. Different kinds of clocks are there represented as striking the hour at exactly the same time but each one in its own way. Thus will Judaism together with all other then existing religions record the spiritual needs which God and the world will demand of man that he satisfy; yet will each people do so in its own individual way, thus contributing to the harmony of the nations.

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Tuesday, January 27, 1914

A number of students of the Senior Class of the Seminary have, at my suggestion, constituted themselves into a Homiletic ~~xixxx~~ club. The experiment of my meeting them at the Seminary on Sunday nights did not prove convenient to most of them. They met, therefore, at my house last night at 10:15 P.M. Present were Burstein, Sachs, Feinberg, Bosniak, Alstet, Malper, Teller, Lebendiger and Kohn.

In the course of my remarks I had occasion to refer to the absence in most of us of inner experiences that we could identify as religious. It would certainly be worth while to account for this remarkable change in the psychology of the Jew who from being a fervent seeker after God has become blase with regard to matters spiritual. Bosniak suggested that it might be a reaction to the overtime religiosity of our parents. I thought that this phenomenon might be more correctly described as one of psychical exhaustion, analgous to what occurs in the case of a parent of great genius giving birth to a mental defective. But the main reason undoubtedly appears to be the growth in the scientific conception of existence which gradually displaces the anthropomorphic conception of Deity. Much if not most of the vigor possessed by the religious thought of our ancestors was due to their ~~xxxgixxgxx~~ imagining God in terms of human experience. The same is true of most of the great Christian preachers, of whom Beecher is a striking illustration. The question therefore arises What hope is there of retaining a strong spiritual sense with the complete ~~dxxxx~~ deanthropomorphization of Deity? Fortunately we possess in the history of thought an instance of deep religious experience combined with absolute negation of all human and material attributes of God. Plato is practically the first one to have demonstrated that between spirit and matter there is an impssable gulf. Even to this day, this conception of his has not taken full possession of the human mind in spite of the high degree of development to which science has attained. Yet with so extreme a form of immaterialism, Plato evinces in his writings a most profound religious sense. We cannot, of course, be Platos. But his having lived and influenced human thought proves that a deep religious sense can psychologically coexist with the very highest form of abstraction from things of sense.

In writing this I am reminded of James' treatment of this subject in his book on Pluralism which is the best kind of introduction to Bergsonism. If his contention is correct - and I am very much inclined to believe that it is - we will fare far better as far as the cultivation of the religious sense is concerned not by thinking with Plato ideaward but with Bergson lifeward.

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Tuesday, February 3, 1914

In the narrative portions of the Torah it is not the characters that control the plot but the plot that controls the characters. Of course, the plot is the unfolding of God's plan with regard to man.

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Wednesday-Thursday, February 11, 12, 1914

The Sabbath Afternoon circle met last Saturday at the house. Present were Abe Cohen, Draxler, Blaut, Friedman and Crohn. The discussion turned upon the question as to the way in which we might become aware of the Divine Presence. I maintained that unless we were able to identify any definite psychical experience as a reaction to the Divine Presence in the world, all our attempts to build up a structure of religion are futile. As it is undoubtedly the fact that most of us scarcely ever enjoy experiences of this kind, religion for most of us should amount to a continuous effort at discovering in our own lives those experiences that might furnish us with the awareness of God, and once having discovered that we should bend all our energies at cultivating them. (So far the discussion. The rest suggested afterwards.) As long as mankind were agreed that God was to be conceived in quasi-human form, the problem of the religious life consisted of bringing into the foreground of the mind a definitely conceived image which tended to recede the background of consciousness. The mental awareness of God was therefore a comparatively easy

matter, since the materials of that consciousness lay near at hand in the vari us objects of sensation. But now that these materials are no longer acceptable, and we must go to the more hidden contents of the inner life for the kind of materials that would serve as evidence of God's presence in us and with us, the task of the religious life is a more difficult one. (Good subject for Atonement Day on text) But so long as we recognize the task not only as legitimate but as indispensable to a normal human life, religion's existence in the future is assured. The chief difference between religion in the past and religion in the future is that while the former made belief in God essential, the latter will make the search for God essential. (Religion not static but dynamic.) The fundamental principle of religion in the future will be that the highest aim of each human life is to seek God, that is, to search among the various psychical experiences lived through, that one which gives us an immediate awareness of God, or if one has not had any such experience to widen his range of experience till he will have at last found one that fulfills that condition of supplying the looked for awareness of God.

It is at this point that the contribution of Judaism should make itself felt. If we follow out the above principle that it is each person's duty to live so that some experience in his life becomes a means of communion with God, there is the danger of an amount of arbitrariness and subjectivism that might destroy the value of religion. A tendency of this kind, however, would be checked if we had a definite criterion whereby we might test the results of our search. That criterion is furnished by the teaching of Judaism that right conduct is the all important duty towards God. As applied to the conception of religion as a seeking of God, that criterion would be used in the following manner: if any experience

either in the intellectual, emotional or will aspect of our inner life is thought by us as furnishing us with the awarenness of the Divine Presence we are in search of, it must lead to right conduct, to the exercise of justice and love. If it fail to do that, we merely delude ourselves in believing that it is God we are aware of. All that we are then aware of is a purely individual mental state.

The conception of religion's task in the future is in accordance with the principle implied throughout the problem of reconstruction viz that identify of spiritual life is not in the objects that satisfy the demands of that life but in the continuance of the demands themselves. The case of humanity appears to be similar to that of a caravan winding slowly over the desert, to whom there appears from time to time a mirage now in the direction of its course and now in a direction away from where their course lies. Those that are deluded by the former kind of mirage are led to hasten their steps towards what they believe to be an oasis rich in the shady palms and refreshing springs. They soon discover their mistake. But, though dissappointed they have been ~~xxxxxx~~ by the mirage brought nearer to the very goal they had been approaching. Those, however, who are deluded by a mirage that lies in a direction away from their course are not only deceived but having lost their path die in the desert. Analagous to these two types of delusion, the one benefidal the other dangerous, have been the conceptions of God as taught by Judaism and heathensim respectively. Those that have followed Judaism's conception, insofar as the latter was anthropomorphic, have followed a delusion. But it was at least anthropomorphism of the right kind, it was a mirage in the direction of the progress of the human spirit and of the ethical and spiritual improvement of mankind. Not so with the heathen conceptions of God.

Theirs were delusions that turned man away hopelessly from the very direction of spiritual progress. Now however that the mirage has melted away, it is for us to keep right on the path we have started and to seek the God whom Judaism believed it had attained, but as to whom the great spirits in Israel were clearly conscious that they only vaguely realized.

On Sunday I went to New Haven to speak before the Yale Menorah Society in the evening. I took as my subject "The Nature of the Present Crisis in Judaism." I defined it as being due to social and intellectual causes, both of which correspond respectively to the questions "Why" and "How" Be a Jew? as treated on p. 40 sqq. I was more definite this time, however, in reference to the problem "How be a Jew?" by pointing out that the main difficulty is due to the elimination of the concept of the miraculous from our thinking. As the social condition for the maintenance of religion is the existence of a group that possessed something in common besides religion, so the indispensable intellectual condition is that the religion address itself to the actual experiences of the individuals in that group using the term experience in the widest sense of mental content. Intellectually, therefore, much of the content of Judaism violates this condition as far as the present generation is concerned. The solution, therefore, is not in merely setting the hands of the clock to correspond with the time indicated by other clocks, nor in forcibly getting the pendulum in motion, but in examing the inner workings of Israel's history and spirit. In revaluation and interpretation of the historic Jewish values we shall meet with the solution of the intellectual problem in Judaism.

Two of the fellows met me when I got off the train at 7, took me to the Taft Hotel near the college, kept me company till

the time scheduled for me to speak. They told me of the various difficulties they encountered before organizing, this being the first year of their organization. The main obstacle in the way seemed to have been the feeling that the segregation of the Jewish fellows which organization would lead to, was not in keeping with the democratic traditions of which the college boasted. This is certainly an interesting fact that throws light upon the effect of the democratic spirit upon the social life of the Jews. The truth seems to be that if the so called democratic spirit at Yale had been more than a hollow pretension, as I inferred from the incidental remarks of the men, there would not even now have been a Menorah society there. An argument which for a long time carried weight with most of the men against organizaing a Menorah Society was advanced by a Jewish young man who happened to be on the editorial board of the college paper. He told of a cartoon that was sent in to the paper immediately after a number of the Jewish boys had met a year or two ago to consider the proposition of organizing a Menorah Society. He naturally opposed the insertion of that lampoon into the paper, but in doing so he had to encounter the ill will of all the rest on the board of editors. Another interesting fact with regard to these men is that in accordance with their own assertions, it was Zionism that has swung them over to taking an interest in Judaism, and the political aspect of it even more so than the cultural, because of its more tangible form. The indebtedness of the revival in things Jewish to Zionism was also brought home to me the day after when I met the Jewish Harvard students.

On Monday I spoke before the Harvard Menorah Society. My topic was "What Shall Be Our Attitude Towards the Bible?" I pointed out that as most of the men had not been brought up in a knowledge of the Bible, due to circumstances beyond theirs and their parents'

control they could not be expected to be interested in the Bible from the standpoint of religion. Under present circumstances the cultivation of the knowledge of the Bible should begin with the kind of interest which it was natural for men who aspire to culture to entertain, namely, the literary interest. In this connection I dwelt upon the ~~xxxxxx~~ part that the Bible played in forming the thought and shaping the history of the civilized world and particularly of the English speaking nations.

Next in order worth reckoning with, if not necessarily advocating, is the scientific interest. In describing in a general way the nature of the scientific study of the Bible, I referred to the effect which it had upon the superficially minded, as similar to that which was exerted when the universal prevalence of natural law and order in the universe became known. As in the latter instance, the elimination of the divine was only temporary and soon gave way to a reconstructed yet a theistic view of the universe, so with the Bible, the discovery that it was the result of the innermost workings of the human soul does not cancel the divine element from the Bible but only transfers it to the human lives and experiences whence it took its rise.

This consideration at best sets forth only in a negative way the intrinsic value of the Bible which should give rise to religious interest in its contents. Before we can expect such interest to be aroused it is necessary to reckon with the cause which has led many to reject the Bible as in any way helpful in our religious thinking. That is undoubtedly due to their having repudiated the belief in miracle. We must, therefore, read the Bible with a view to the great traits of the Jewish consciousness that struggled to become articulate in its traditions, laws, prophecies, psalms and wisdom. We should study all of its traditions with the purpose in mind of

finding out their bearing upon Israel's destiny and duty in the world, and then seek to make that destiny and duty our own. This pragmatic interpretation involving the regard for the Bible as the chief institution of the Jewish people, will open up before us the vision of the soul of Israel wrestling with man and circumstance to rise to the highest realms of the spirit.

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Friday, February 13, 1914; Saturday, Februrary 14, 1914

After realizing that the prime condition for experiencing the Divine Presence is a state of yearning and seeking, the question arises What is the relation of this seemingly more vital religion to Judaism? Or: In what distinctive manner is an adherent to Judaism expected to give expression to this inner yearning? To begin with it is apparent that this yearning must be brought into relation with Israel. Stated in terms of experience what exactly does this involve? It seems to imply that it is the religious duty of the Jew to seek to satisfy that yearning first by discerning a divine element in Israel's past history and spiritual strivings, and secondly, by engaging in efforts calculated to render Israel in the future a nation testifying to the reality of God in human life. An adherent of Judaism must realize that the history of his people reveals something more than the mechanical relationship between a people and its environment. He must become conscious that in Israel there has manifested itself an ethno-psychic force which has awakened in its spiritual leaders a ~~xxxxxxxxxxx~~ consciousness of God that was singularly compelling as far as they were concerned and that was fruitful of God as far as the rest of the world was concerned. That same ethno-psychic force rendered the masses of Israel susceptible to the testimony of these spiritual leaders. But it is not enough merely to become conscious of this ethno-psychic force as an objective

thing existing outside of oneself. One must also feel that force coursing through one's own innermost life. In this way only may one be said to share the life of Israel. The next step is so to consecrate oneself to the spiritual upliftment of Israel, that at some stage in the process there shall be occasion for this yearning after God to find some satisfaction. Of course, the notion that we must find satisfaction for the yearning after God through Israel assumes that such yearning can only be satisfied through the medium of a social organization. The reason for this is that without society in some form or other no such yearning would have made itself felt in the human heart. It requires all of the intricate web of social life so to raise the level of individual life as to render it incomplete without the realization of God. Furthermore, since it is impossible for an individual to have an amount of experience content adequate enough for furnishing the kind of experience that might be identified as a reaction to the divine in existence, unless he enter into the manifold of social life, it follows that society is a necessary complement to each individual if he is to aim at awareness of God. Now the question is, what society shall it be through which one is to obtain this divine experience? If one is an adherent of Judaism the only answer to the question can be that Israel offers the requisite social opportunity for him to satisfy his yearning after God. This does not mean that he must satisfy it through Israel only. What it does mean is that he must satisfy it through Israel first, and then through whatever other people or peoples he chooses to cast his lot with.

This evening I addressed a mothers' meeting at 40 West 115 St., the Branch of the Uptown Talmud Torah. I introduced my remarks by referring to a cuckoo song which the children sang at the opening of the exercises as symbolic of Jewish effort at revival at a time that is so cold and discouraging as ours is. It is like the song of a bird that lost its way into a land where winter was still in its full force. I then contrasted the spirit of the meeting with the one of Council of Jewish Women of Philadelphia. In the latter, they had reports of the great work they were doing on behalf of the poor children in the crowded sections and on behalf of immigrant girls in the way of religious education. Still as far as they themselves were concerned they wanted me to prove the value of religious education for their own children. At this meeting, however, not one of those present doubted for a moment the importance of religious education for their own children. I commended Dushkin for calling upon the mothers to help him in his task, because he was in keeping with the various teachings of the rabbis which emphasize the importance of the part that the woman takes in the religious life of the people. This attitude towards woman is in recognition of the truth that what a mother wants her child to be determines the weal or woe of the nation. Gave instances of spartan mothers, of Hannah who is the type of Jewish mother. The extent to which this idealistic ambition of the mother I illustrated by a story of one of the collectors employed by the Bureau. As he came to one of the families to collect the monthly tuition fee of the one dollar, the mother of the boy put him off by promising to pay him the next month. Upon his insistence that she pay at once, she told him that her husband was out of work and the grocer's bills had not been paid and they had to go without breakfast that morning. This so moved the young man that he took a dollar and gave it to the woman, saying to her, that she could pay it back to him next month. As he turned to go the woman followed him and insisted that he take the dollar as tuition fee for the child.

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Thursday, February 26, 1914

Last night I spoke before the young people's organization of the ~~8~~ 85th Street synagogue on the subject of Ceremonies, their Nature and meaning in Judaism. The following is the substance of what I said: Ceremonies in religion are usually represented as being commanded by God. As an object of study, however, they must be examined as a natural product of the inner or mental life of man, having their definite laws of rise, growth and decay. Such a study of them in no way eliminates the divine that is in them any more than the realization of the extent to which the soul or the universe as a whole is governed by eternal laws lessens in any degree their dependence upon divine causation. The first fact that strikes us about religious ceremonies is that they are not at all unique and without parallel in the other phases of life. It is a popular error that ceremonies are limited to religion. Yet what is a handshake, or the tipping of the hat, or a salute or the wearing of a uniform if not ceremony. It appears then that religious ceremonial is a species of ceremonial in general which we may define as the conventional sign language of social relations. The main purpose of ceremonial is to give effective, dramatic and abbreviated expression to the various emotions that center about social relations such as deference, regard, fellowship. Being a language it will oft be as arbitrary as the particular words are for the objects which they denote. Religious ceremonies constitute the conventional sign language of those social relations which are regarded as divinely ordained. The differentiating character of religious ceremonies is the particular kind of social relations to which they give expression. To carry the matter one step further, we may define Jewish religious ceremonies as the conventional sign language of those Jewish social relations which are regarded as divinely ordained. A marriage ceremony is religious in character, because the bond which

unites them is not merely a social convention but a divinely ordained institution.

To what extent ceremonies are indispensable to religion becomes evident when we bear in mind that to be religious involves having entered into social relations that are regarded as divinely ordained and to be a Jew in the religious sense of the word is to have entered into Jewish social relations with the faith and understanding that they are divinely ordained. It is impossible to be religious without having the self or personality developed to a degree of self-consciousness which enables it to become the center of all ideas, emotions and acts that are designated as religion. But such a high degree of the personality of an individual is only possible through the interaction of the individual with the society about him. The self is not an individual but a social achievement. Hence the development of religion is inconceivable without social interaction. Undoubtedly the person that has obtained the knowledge of religious values from the society round about him may continue to cherish these values as a hermit. But in taking that attitude he is only displaying ingratitude to the society which was the source of that which he esteems so highly, and to that extent fails to carry out one of the most elementary duties of religion, namely, gratitude. Similarly when one claims that going in the field and beholding the beauties of nature evokes a spirit of worship and that it is superior to the house of prayer and the recital of stated ritual as a source of religious inspiration, he forgets that the very power to find inspiration in nature he has derived not from nature but from the religious community in which he was born and bred up./

To think and plan correctly with regard to any phase of human mind it is necessary to avoid the common error of regarding the individual as prior to society. This is like believing that the

sea is made up of its waves, or that a tree of the trunk, roots, branches and leaves that were in some way brought together. The case is the very opposite. Society is prior to the individual. The collective mind comes in time before the individual mind. The latter is a sort of precipitate differentiated from the collective mind. Hence the interaction or social relationship that obtains between the individual and the collective mind is not something external to the individual mind but forms part of its very existence. Likewise for the individual mind to be related to the collective mind or to enter into social relations in a religious way is not something external to the religious life of the individual, but forms the very essence of it. But how is it possible to enter into these social relations without making use of the sign language by means of which the social relations are given articulated expression? Ceremonial, therefore, is essentially bound up with the living of a religious life. But it is not a means, or has, hitherto, been believed, of bringing the individual into direct and immediate communion with the divine, either making the divine presence an immediate object of experience, or in some magic way obtaining divine favor that would, perhaps, otherwise been withheld. The efficiency and functioning of ceremonial begins only when the community to which the individual is socially related in some way is consciously regarded as the medium whereby God and individual are brought close to each other.

This principle is illustrated with remarkable clearness in the Jewish ceremonial system. They all have as their avowed purpose either the rememberance of the exodus from Egypt, or the hallowing of the person or both. Compare, for instance, the following from the commandment with regard to the fringes . Now, insofar as the ceremony recalls the exodus, it introduces the individual into the society of the whole of past Israel. But this relationship

is not of a secular nature. To the believing Jew the common life that has been handed down from generation to generation of Israel of the past is a divinely constituted life. Every time the Jew puts on his tphilin or consecrates the sabbath by means of the cup of wine or observes a festival he uses the sign language of the Jewish social relation which is considered as divinely ordained. Furthermore, the hallowing of the person represents the sacred union into which the Jew must enter with the rest of his people that are contemporary with him. It is in that way that ceremonies such as those that pertain to care of food and person are calculated to give expression to the belief that the bond which holds together all Jews of the same generation is not merely a racial or national one, but a spiritual and sacred one that the Jews are still a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

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Sunday, August 23, 1914

The students of the Seminary published this year their first annual. Reluctant as I was I had to contribute the article on the "Supremacy of the Torah." It seems to have created some discussion among the graduates and to have aroused a few of them from their apparent indifference to the fundamental questions of Torah, revelation, etc. Rubenowitz, with whom I had occasion about two years ago, while I was in Boston, to discuss the futility of most of our endeavors because they only touch the surface of our problems, came to Long Branch in the middle of July and asked me to invite a few of the leading graduates to an informed conference. We were going to confine the "conclave" primarily to those who approached the problem of Judaism with an open mind, but upon reflection such a procedure seemed likely to give offence those who, happening to be in and about New York would not be invited. I sent out, accordingly, invitations to nearly all of the graduates that chanced to be in the East. The date was set for Wednesday, August 12 and was to last as long as the men would

find it convenient to attend. The following came: Abels from Altoona, Greenstone and Klein and Melamed from Philadelphia, Hoffman from Newark, Jacob Kohn from New York, Kauvar who was staying at Long Branch, Eckstein who was in Philadelphia. Rubenowitz from Boston, Lichter from Far Rockaway and Drob who was summering at Arverne. Kauvar wanted to avoid discussion of fundamentals while Greenstone, Hoffman,Kohn and Rubenowitz were anxious to take up the theoretical problem at once. I did not want to override Kauvar's wishes, so I left it to a tossup and he had his wish gratified to the extent of opening the conference with matters of a practical character. Kauvar was asked to give an account of his itinerary in some of the western cities, Lincoln, Des Moines, Chicago and others where he made propaganda in behalf of the United Synagogue. There was nothing particularly interesting in his account/ It revealed his well-meaning but mistaken policy to win the old type of orthodox congregations for the United Synagogue. Nearly everyone tried to find some interesting phase to the facts that he described, but in the course of two hours it became evident that it was hard to work up an enthusiasm for practical questions.

The next morning when we met again, Hoffman read from a few notes that he had jotted down on traditionalJudaism. He described tradition as a dynamic force which operated with the concepts and ideas of each age. Among the elements of the dynamic force he enumerated the cardinal principles of Judaism concerning God, the Torah, the selection of Israel, Revelation, etc. Tradition Judaism, he claimed, selects from current beliefs and ideas those which are consistent with the cardinal principles that constitute the dynamic force. On the other hand, Reform Judaism accepts current opinion as unquestionably true and laying the burden of proof upon tradition accepts only that which is in keeping with current ideas.

Kohn gave us his favorite principle of selection as to those laws which are binding and those the authority of which is no longer

in force. In view of the distinction that the Talmud makes between the [illegible] and [illegible] he would accept all of the former as binding. But [illegible] or [illegible] or [illegible] which are not authentically based upon the Torah are subject to change.

I presented my view of "authority". In the first place I took exception to Hoffman's identification of the cardinal principle as the dynamic force in Judaism. Only a living or moving thing can be termed dynamic. The dynamic force in Judaism is, therefore, none other than the socio-psychic vitality of the Jewish People. The problem therefore cannot be reduced to a question of preserving certain abstract concepts, whether they belong to the past or th the present. Our only concern is that the Jewish people be worthy of being Israel. This cannot be accomplished if we regard authority as something external. Authority may be based upon personal experience and conviction and yet not be subjective. It may possess the highest degree of objectivity, if the experiences and convictions are those in which normally constituted people share. There is an objective standard of beauty in spite of the fact that only that is beautiful which is immediately experienced to be so. The opinion of the critic is only authoritative in the sense of serving as a guide. The reconstruction of Judaism on the basis of natural human experience withinreach of every one of us is not carried out to its legitimate length because we have little confidence in human reason and experience. The fear is analogous to that entertained by those who have ever opposed the democratic principle in government.

The principle of internal authority like that of external authority is to get the individual to cooperate with the social group to which he belongs. The only difference between the two kinds of authority is in the manner of getting him to cooperate. If we bring into existence those conditions which will make of the social group a means of enriching in every way the life of the individuals that belong

to it, it will be an easy matter to declare that as authoritative for the individual which serves the interests and spiritual wellbeing of the group.

I accepted the invitation of Mr. Israel Unterberg to deliver a sermon at the Arverne Synagogue and I left Long Branch Friday afternoon to come to Arverne in time for the Sabbath. With the sermon which was written by my wife at my dictation on manila paper packed in my grip I took the 3:49 for New York. I abandoned myself to the reading of the biography of Zachariah Frankel, when whom should I catch sight of but my friend Rabbi Charles Hoffman walking in abstractedly into the car with a copy of Deuteronomy in his hand and a skull cap on his head. I was glad to see him and to talk to him about the purpose of my trip. I yielded only too willingly to his request that I tell him what I was going to speak about. Being of a lawyer's turn of mind he could not be expected to listen to what I had to say without taking issue. He regarded my application of "no one shall appear before the Lord empty" as far fetched and told me that I ought to have lived in Alexandria, that I would make excellent company for Philo or Hypatia. Still I like him exceedingly. He is too sincere for me to doubt his honesty, and too ignorant for me to want to learn from him.

When I got to New York I had to rush at top speed to catch the 5:20 for Arverne. I knew that I could not get into an Arverne train without meeting some one that would deprive me of the pleasure of contemplation. I no sooner entered the car than I saw Turkeltaub sitting with a young man whom he introduced to me as his son-in-law. His name is Spicehandler. They made room for me and I was at once challenged to explain why I wore a heavier suit than Mr. Turkeltaub's. He showed me his own which he had been wearing the last two summers, and expatiated upon its lightness and coolness. Knowing that he had heard Rubenowitz preach the week before, I asked him about Rubenowitz's

sermon and he told me that he noticed a great improvement in him. When he had heard him two years ago, he thought him a "lemon." This is Turkeltaub's own term. He spoke about Zionism. T. went on; they all speak the same, he added. This criticism of T's is characteristic of the attitude of most of the type known as "all rightniks" towards the English speaking ministers. The talk then turned on the war, about which the newspapers are in the dark, though it is apparent that at the present stage the Germans are sweeping everything before them in Belgium.

When I got off the train two well groomed elderly Jews with rather embonpoint? with little gray "goaties" accosted me, and offered to take me into their automobile to save me the trouble of walking a few vlocks in the rain. The streets were flooded in places as a result of a previous rain storm. (I do not think the streets would have been permitted to be in that condition if the summer resort were inhabited by Gentiles, particularly of the wealthy class. I presume the city officials are quite aware that the Jews are too scared to raise a protest against any unncessary inconveniences to which they are subjected.) The automobile brought me to Mr. Unterberg's house, and I learned that its owner was Mr. Unterberg's next door neighbor.

I t was still some time before Mincha and Sylvia Rubin entertained me with the usual palaver about the weather, bathing, the members of the family, etc., when Mrs. Unterberg came down. I noticed at once in her the usual manner of the tired amateur woman philanthropist. I left for the synagogue. My guide was Clarence, a young chap, tall, and handsome for his age, rather simple minded and ill-mannered. When I got to the synagogue I saw a row of young men and women in black who were evidently mourners, and were therefore standing outside of the auditorium in the hall until the .

There were a few minyanim of men and one or two women in mourning in

the synagogue proper. The service was dully monotonous and uninterest - ing. The officers of the synagogue were not present because they could not come in time for the service. The chazan sang in a thin brassy little voice, and whenever he would take a higher note it was never the one that you expected. It is, indeed surprising that people have the patience to sit through such a service. I cannot imagine myself participating in religious exercises of that kind if I were a layman. At the services I met a few of my colleagues in the ministry. They looked as uninspired and uninspiring as wooden Indians.

When I returned to the Unterberg home I found the whole family gathered ready for Kiddush. Though used to the sanctimoniousness of the Unterberg's household, I could not but admire the solemnity and ceremoniousness with which husband and wife, parents and children kissed and blessed each other. I must confess that I could not help smiling inwardly at seeing my brother-in-law, the physician Isidore ~~fixing~~ going through all the motions as though he were cast for the part. I had somehow associated him with the kind of young men who regard themselves so cosmopolitan in their tastes as to be above all traditional formalities and ceremonials. Just imagine everyone drinking from the same cup of wine, in violation of all sanitary principles. Mr. Unterberg literally broke bread, by tearing off large portions from the twists before him, and the plate with the pieces of bread was passed around. Mrs. Unterberg explained to me that her husband learned the ceremony of breaking bread from Dr. H. P Mendes. A remarkable man that Dr. Mendes. Yet I believe that his being of Sephardic descent and his belonging to the Jewish aristocracy rather than his learning or character accounts for U's copying this ritual from him. I doubt whether a rabbi of their own tribe would ever be flattered by imitation of that kind.

(A)

Supper over, we went out on the porch where we found Mr. and Samuel Mrs. Hyman. Mr. Hyman is a remarkable type of Jew. He is a successful feather merchant of about forty-two. He is tall and fat, with a smooth shaven, huge and fleshy countenance. He would hardly be taken for a Jew. He would be taken for a cross between a Slav and Irish type. A more cock-sure, self-opinionated man is seldom to be met with among our people, particularly about matters which he knows least. His piety manifested itself in him while he was still a young man, when he had to struggle very hard to make his way in the world, which was by buying up feathers, ivory and similar articles from bird catchers, trappers, etc., but this piety of his has been reenforced and encouraged in him by favoring circumstances to such an extent that it has become overbearing. It was this piety which found him a rich girl whose father was surprised to see an American young man wash before meals and say grace after them. The father of the girl, who was an Alsatian Jew, took him into his business and gave him his daughter as a reward. Hyman then took an interest in "shul " matters, and people began to listen to his expression of opinion on the various phases of "shul" life. This so far encouraged him that he was among the first to proffer his advice to ~~Dr.~~ Rabbi Mayer Asher who had become the rabbi of the Madison Avenue Congregation, B'nai Jeshurun, to which his father-in-law belonged. He was a trustee of the 85th Street Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun in 1903-1904 when it invited me to organize its religious school and to preach occasionally. When in the spring of 1904 the question of electing me as rabbi came up, he wanted to see me elected as the spiritual head, but under no other title than rabbi. Knowing however that although I had a diploma from the Seminary, the leaders of the Congregation were by no means in the wrong in insisting that I have Smicha from some Rav of the old type whom they could recognize as an authority, I consented to being elected as minister. This so displeased Hyman that he resigned from the trusteeship.

in chap on K.J. Vol I

in chap on K.J.

(A)

Another factor which contributed to his orthodoxy's becoming insufferable was the success which crowned his persistent efforts in erecting the synagogue at Arverne. During the first four or five years of the existence of that synagogue, he would bore me to death by repeating ad nauseum the story of his gigantic undertaking. Since then he has held the office of vice-president in the synagogue of 85 Street and did all in his power to ingratiate himself with the old timers whose recommendation of his orthodoxy seemed to constitute for him the ? ? (p.66 top) in life. It was only because they failed to appreciate all that he had done to clean and paint the "shul", to build toilets for the women, to have the janitor dressed up in gold band uniform and found fault with him for involving them in a ten-thousand dollar indebtedness that he has refused to continue serving as vice-president for them.

in article on K.S.

Another reenforcing factor presented itself when he was present at the constituent convention of the United Synagogue which was held in the Seminary in February, 1913. Hyman then got up and in his blustering and overbearing manner began to recite his oft reiterated statements about his being an American born Jew who kept his "Shabbos", and who believed that there was only one kind of Judaism, namely modern orthodox. ~~The rewards~~ His remarks were intended to dispute the right of the United Synagogue to have anything to do with congregations that had an organ and family pews. ~~His remarks were~~ He was interrupted by Dr. Schechter, who burst forth in a fit of rage, and stamped with his foot at Hyman's ~~audacity~~ hutzpah. That was enough for Hyman. Ever since then he has been a sworn enemy of Schechter's and the United Synagogue. To mention the latter to him is like waving a red flag before a bull. From that time on he has thrown in his lot zealously with the Orthodox Union and has been elected their vice-president.

Furthermore, he was quite ill a few months ago, due to an

(2)

attack of intestinal paralysis. Recovery in men of this type is usually accompanied by a religiosity which results from the conviction that their great merit earns their recovery for them and hence it is their duty to redouble whatever religious zeal they had been in the habit of displaying. This has been the case with Hyman.

Such was Hyman who came to the Unterberg's the Friday night I was there. I do not think he came to pay his respects to me, as he is not xxxx on very friendly terms with me, since I have refused to act as his lieutenant by not accepting the position of rabbi in 85th Street Congregation a second time, unless they were willing to join the United Synagogue. He is a glib and interesting talker, and he dilated upon European conditions every time Mrs. Unterberg and Mrs. Hyman paused in their YWHA talk, which is their hobby. Of course I pay them my highest respects for their painstaking efforts in helping to erect such a useful and wonderful edifice (as the YWHA building on North Central Park). But have they not become just a bit too pharisaical about their philanthropic work? I was extremely bored by all that was said, and being afflicted with neuralgic pains in the right side of my face, I could not pick up courage enough to say anything. They remarked that I kept silent, and I replied that I shall have my say the day after.

Monday, August 24, 1914

When I mentioned to Mr. Unterberg the real reason for my silence he said,"Whenever Hyman is one of the company you must let him have the center of the stage." In this connection I recall a characterization of the Jewish population at Arverne that is just now going the rounds. It is reported that the Russians (the Russian Jews) under General Zelenko (one of the Arverne "all rightnicks") have invaded Arverne, are marching upon Edgemere, and their outposts are to be seen in Far Rockaway where the Germans (German Jews) are fleeing before them."

When I got up the next morning my headache was almost gone. he sun shone brightly and the air was cool and pleasant. It was an deal morning. After a light breakfast I went with Mr. Unterberg to ynagogue. We went by way of the boardwalk. There was little evidence r a Sabbath spirit. The stores were being opened up and Jews in shirt leeves were hammering open boxes of goods. As we walked along my eye aught sight of signs announcing the holding of a carnival, and a riot of dancing and music," and I at once got curious as to the days n which the carnival was to be held, and sure enough, Friday night nd Saturday were to witness the climax. I asked Mr. Unterberg how oes it come that such a thing is allowed, and he told me that it was he first that he saw of tnis. He thought in fact that no carnivals f any kind were to be held at all, because six years ago a carnival as organized by a man named Margolies for some Home and when it was earned that it was to be on a Sabbath, the leaders of the congrega- ion interfered, and succeeded in having the carnival for the Sabbath alled off only when they consented to contribute $500 towards the haritable purpose for which it was to be held. I suggested that the ongregation ought to interfere this time as well. With that, our con- ersation turned to something else.

When we arrived at the synagogue the people had already re- ited a considerable part of the prayers. As the services progressed n the mechanical fashion of the orthodox the synagogue was gradually filling p, ~~until~~ towards the end of the reading of the Torah there was not a acant seat in the ~~house~~ auditorium which holds about five hundred. Many were tanding in the back. The character of the audience was quite differ- nt from the one I had observed in the previous years. I found out l ater that the synagogue was attended mostly by Jews who lived in the nearby towns of Hammel. They generally come to pray but refused to pay. What Hammel Jews look like I noticed when I beheld a man and

wife entering the synagogue at the same time as I did. The man was small with a thin wizened face almost hidden by a full round black beard. A tip of a red bandana handkerchief stuck out from the pocket of his coat. His wife who walked a few feet behind him, was a stumpy stout little woman with a moon face and a smooth plastered wig on her head. She was dressed in black satin and carried a huge [illegible] under hidden under her arm. These were typical of the majority of the men and women to whom I was going to hold forth on the true way of grasping the reality of the spiritual.

But what is even more surprising is that the few of what are known as the "Penei" with whom I am familiar, and who are quite Americanized as far as their outward mode of life is concerned, should display not much more intelligence than the Hammels type I have mentioned. I remember how they raved three years ago about a sermon of Kauvais' on the occasion of the Alumni meeting that was held there at the time, though/as he was speaking most of the alumni blushed for shame. This year too the report went abroad that his was the greatest sermon they had ever heard. I also learned that the Sabbsth before the great luminary in Israel, Eiseman spoke and again they were quoting the Rev. Dr. as having said this and having said that. I was told that he had spoken about the war. On further inquiry I learned that he said a few inane commonplaces which the papers are full of nowadays to repletion. This too was on the Sabbath when the month of Elul was announced. Yet he did not make the slightest reference to Jewish thought or Jewish life. That didn't bother them in the least. So simple-minded a folk is the elite of our Arverne crows. One can imagine with what gusto I rose to speak before them on what it took me days to formulate.

Before I rose to speak Mr. Unterberg suggested that I mention at the end of my remarks the fact that a carnival was being contemplated for the Sabbath day and that the congregation registered its protest. I said I would speak about it in the course of the sermon proper.

My text was . The thought which I developed was that we cannot hope to grasp the reality of the spiritual - which is the present day equivalent for beholding the presence of God - unless we cultivatewisdom and character and live a life of service. In Judaism we come across various dicta and experiences which point to the fact that contrary to the popular notion worship is not a means of bettering human life, but the reverse, to the extent that human life is ennobled by virtue and self sacrifice it becomes fit to worship. Cf. .

I then referred to Richard Cabot's book on What Men Live By and pointed out that in the life of both individuals and peoples, work, play and love had to be directed with the end in view that they might render them fit for worship without which life cannot be complete. The work of a people is the interaction of the various social, economic and political relations; the play of a people is its art and literature and social pleasures; the love of a people is the loyalty of its young to its past and its future. The last is fostered by educational institution; the first by courts of arbitration, and the play by socializing the synagogue. It was at this point that I brought in the violation of the Sabbath that was contemplated in holding a carnival in a community that was almost entirely Jewish. This I used as proof of what happens when the synagogue fails to cultivate the play instinct and leaves it to be exploited by characterless men to feather their own pockets. I urged that every effort should be made to prevent it. After the services Mr. Unterberg weakly announced that

a meeting of protest would be held the following day at 3 o'clock. After the services there were the usual meaningless congratulations and [illegible] greetings.

At dinner the discussion turned entirely upon the war news, as though none of those present had ever been to synagogue. Of course if there were something striking or new in the war news we could understand why all trace of service attendance was deleted as it were from the very talk at table. O yes, there was some reference to Mr. So and So having a hard time in finding a seat, and a certain woman with two of her friends occupying the seats owned by members, but nothing further -- But this is typical of how little our people are given to thinking and pondering upon the problems of life and religion. I must also mention that when the war talk gave out, the fate of the Giants (a baseball team and not the ones of Genesis VI) formed the staple of conversation.

When dinner was over I went out on the porch and managed to ehile away the time until some of my acquaintances both rabbinical and lay began to put in appearances. First came Rabbis Eiseman, Adolph Coblenz and Jacob Grossman. Eiseman had picked up his knowledge of Judaism in Dr. Mendes' Sunday School. He then attended for two or three years the preparatory class in the old Seminary. In 1903 he and I were engaged by the 72 Street Congregation to give alternately five sermons each on the high holidays and the ensuing Succoth festival It seemed that the congregation was undecided as to which one of us to elect, but he had some relatives among the "church pillars," and I suspect that the president Abe Aassel hoped to palm off his fat mustached daughter on him, for I recall how lavishly he entertained him at the poultry farm to which he invited both of us. To be sure. Eiseman has a pleasing face, his hair is wavy and well combed and is always clean shaven. His feet trip lightly in the dance, and his

hands hold gracefully the cards at a poker game. His work is confined to a careful study of the sermons in the Brooklyn Eagle, which he delivers to his congregation in a good voice. Though older than I am and quite an expert in smutty jokes, he is a favorite marrying and burying minister. In spite of all this I am fond of the fellow, as he does not trespass upon my ground; and he also possesses a kind of melancholy air due probably to his having suffered many losses in his family. What I say in disparagement of him is primarily intended to record the depths of ignorance and indifference to which our people have sunk to look upon a man of that type as a spiritual leader and as a rabbi in Israel.

Coblenz is the very opposite type of man. He is a young fellow of about twenty-six or seven, rabbi in Syracuse, a real product of the "Golus". Cultured and given to deep philosophic thought, but weak witted and impractical. He hopes to save Judaism by convincing people that it teaches "the absoluteness of the ought."

Grossman a simple good-natured thoroughly alive and ambitious young man of about twenty seven or eight. He is the principal of the Educational Alliance religious school and is fond of formulating his ideal as desiring to become a Jewish Maxwell (the superintendent of Education in New York). He speaks haltingly, ~~not~~ but in a manner that is ingratiating. He does not give the impression of being able to do much. Yet he seems to know what he wants and to succeed in getting it.

Other company then arrived. Mr. and Mrs. Edward Epstein with their daughter Judith.

Tuesday, August 25, 1914

Mr. Epstein is a slim medium sized sallow complexioned man of about 45. He is not well-to-do and does not wield any influence, because he lacks personality. He has at least some common sense and can be reasoned with. Outside of Joseph H. Coehn he is the only member

of my former congregation to whom I have ventured to speak openly on matters of belief. His wife is an American born woman, one of a large family headed by the late Abba Baum, now dead about twelve years, who was among the first Russian Jews to arrive in New York. When I was a little boy of about eight or nine father took me over to his house which was at the time far out of the city; from this I conclude that he must have been an unusually kind man, as I do not remember anyone else to whom father ever took me in those years. Furthermore, from the description of him given by those who remember him as well as by his children, I gather that he was a saintly type of Jew, of the kind that one hears about as having been frequent in the old country, but that I have not had the good fortune of meeting in my own entourage. His children speak of the way he would bring two or three newly arrived immigrant Jews to the house from time to time, and ask his daughters to do everything to make them comfortable. These daughters he sent to Normal College - which was unusual among Russian immigrants at the time. This accounts for the generation of ignorant women that have grown up, who are even greater materialists than their husbands, and who are the cause of their husbands having but one ideal in life, to amass wealth. But Abba Baum was different. If his daughters were in any way inclined to smile at the crudities of the strangers he had brought to the house he would tell them that the strangers were learned men whom it was the duty to treat with the highest reverence. No wonder that he succeeded in bring up a daughter like Esther Ruskay, of blessed memory. (She died about seven or eight years ago at the age of fifty.) To my sorrow, I must say, that Judaism has not produced the like of her in this country, at least to my knowledge. Her sister Mrs. Epstein is in no way to be compared with her. The only thing in her favor is that she is without the faults, the selfishness, crass ignorance and materialism of the average middle age American Jewish woman, but she possesses

no intellectual or spiritual qualities worth mentioning. Although she was a student of the Teachers Institute for three years - quite a freakish thing for a middle aged married woman half grey to sit in class with young boys and girls - she never really got the point of what I was trying to say. She only knows that I stand for something that is saner and truer than what orthodoxy denotes, but exactly what it is she can not tell. She is unable to think in an organized fashion. Her daughter Judith is far superior to her intellectually and under proper care would develop into a person of note.

Later her sister's husband, Mr. Theodore Crohn came too. He is an elderly man of about fifty five, a father of a large family. He has been a Wall Street broker, and now that the Stock Exchange is closed he is in great straits. I first met him when I came to the ~~xxxx~~ 85th Street Congregation eleven years ago. He was quite a wealthy man at that time and his opinion counted for something in the councils of the congregation. He is very ignorant, although he possesses strong common sense on matters outside of religion, in which he is quite a fanatic. He attends services weekdays and has a big fat prayerbook out of which he constantly recites both in the synagogue and at home, like an old woman in season and out of season. He has succeeded in making religion so odious to most of his children, particularly his oldest son Burril who is a physician, that if they had their way, they would sever their connection with Jewish life completely.

The conversation of the visitors was scattered and desultory the company having divided itself into groups. Mrs. Epstein descanted upon a rebuff she had suffered at the hands of Dr. Benderly, as a result of which she has learned to hate and despise him. I can very well understand his brusque impatience with the manner in which she tried to handle an auditorium full of children and I also sympathize with her bitterness at his uncivil conduct. But she has repeated

this story in my hearing several times. I presume however that this time it was recited for the benefit of a young man by the name of Barnett Brickner, who was also among the visitors. Brickner is connected with the Bureau of Education as head of the Extension work which the Mehillah is doing. He is one of the set of young men selected by Dr. Benderly when he first organized the Bureau. He is about twenty-three, He was graduated from City College two years ago and is a student at Teachers College and one of the special class at the Teachers Institute. He is very sceptical in his thinking, but his scepticism is of a very shallow kind. In fact he is in general rather shallow, and if the proper social influences could be brought to bear upon him he could be made into an observant Jew. As a teacher he is very able. He is a splended story-teller, for which he possesses the knack of an actor. In fact he has the face of an actor though he is rather awkward in his bearing, and, in addition, has a slight limp in his walk due to one leg being shorter than the other.

Mr. Unterberg who at first took part in the conversation left us to go to Mincha service. When he returned the company broke up to take a stroll on the boardwalk. I accosted Mr. Unterberg. He told me that he had been over to see a certain Margolies, the man who was responsible for the carnival taking place on the Sabbath. Unterberg suggested that it might be advisable for me also to go over and talk to Margolies because the latter referred to me in rather deferential terms. I was glad to do what I could to prevent the public desecration of the Sabbath and I consented to meet the man. We walked on till we met him standing in front of his dance hall, and after being introduced to him, I went over by myself with him to the ~~xxxxxxx~~ porch of his house. The argument that he used was that, if the representatives of the congregation had come to him when the announcement of the carnival was first made he would have been glad to change the

te to please them. To do so now, less than a week before it was
take place involved great financial loss. I could not see that
was altogether in the wrong. The observant Jews were certainly
ilty of negligence. I, therefore, sought to persuade him to stand
least half the loss, while the other side should stand the other
lf. He was joined during my argument by two young men named Kommel
d Berger and when they saw that I tried to be just to both sides
ey agreed with me.

I do not know much about this/ Margolies and his confreres.
t their looks seemed to justify what Hyman said of them later in
he evening when he came again to Mr. Unterberg's house, namely that
ey were not far removed from the "Lefty Louis gang and others of
at type. A big heavily built man, short thick neck, the big fleshy
ace of a professional gambler. A cigar stuck out from his left side
reast pocket, as a visible emblem of his being above the need of
bserving the Sabbath. Hyman, who described him as a "l'hachles
onim" which shows what an am-haarez this Hyman is - told us that
argolis makes it his business to stand before his store on the board-
alk and to ask the Jews that come back from synagogue Sabbath after-
oon whether they "davened" a "minchele" for him too. Though I had
ever met the man I remember his father who kept a wine store in
112 Division Street. He was a rather clever [illegible] of the
Lithuanian type, well learned, for a layman, in Talmudic lore. But
as for bringing up children Jewishly, he knew as much about as a cow
about Sunday. He changed for the worse as he grew older and died a
poor asthmatic crank.

As I was pleading with Margolis, first the Unterbergs and
then Hyman arrived. I tried to have them come to some understanding.
After a great deal of wrangling I succeeded at least in getting them
to promise to meet at Hyman's house the next day at 10:30. I expect
to hear the outcome of the entire affair within a few days.

In the evening my brothers and sisters-in-law, Jake Rubin and his wife, David Baron and his wife came to see me and the Unterbergs. Hyman came again. Pigheaded as he is, he arrived at the only conclusion which I knew he was capable of, and that was not to treat with Margolies and his clique. I had quite a spat with him. I pointed out to him how little judgment he had shown in telling Margolies to appoint five Irishmen as arbiters, which Margolies insisted that he was willing to abide by my decision. I also asked Hyman not to treat me as his familiar and address me as "My boy." But in the end we parted peacefully. I took the train at 10:16 P.M. and got to Long Branch two o'clock in the morning.

* * * * *

Sunday, September 13, 1914

Last Tuesday I returned from Long Branch with my family. We summered there during the last three years, in a small cottage on 279 Westwood Avenue. Our stay there was unattended by anything striking or noteworthy. The only thing I wish to record is the manner in which the few Jews I came in contact with still gave evidence of their Jewishness. I understand that there are about two-hundred Jews who live permanently in Long Branch. They are for the most part recently arrived immigrants who earn their livelihoods by driving "stages." They present a very unkempt and uncouth appearance, and seem to be entirely out of touch with any larger current of Jewish life. They have a synagogue in a neighborhodd mostly inhabited by Italians. The entire spirit and conduct in the synagogue are an exact reproduction of what they are known to be in the "old country," without any of the latent enthusiasm or promise of continuance that are characteristic of Jewish life there. The benches are rickety, the walls are bedaubed with ludicrous figures meant to represent the signs of the Zodiac, the flat ceiling is bespangled with golden stars on a blue background, the women's gallery is in the back, with high balustrade and curtains

to shut off the view from the men. Small as the synagogue is, it is divided into sections, as it were by a cumbrous misshapen "almemar." The cleanliness is of a doubtful character. While the prayers are being recited some walk up and down the aisle, others talk, particularly the two or three overgrown gawks, back of the almemar.

Though the synagogue was not far from my house I seldom visited it. Last year I was there on Tisha b'Ab night and I found the people droning half heartedly out of their "Kinnoth" by the light of tapers stuck on to the desks. This year I went there the first Sabbath I had been at Long Branch. They called me up to the Toran. It so happened that one of the members, the kosher butcher of the town insisted upon reading aloud along with the "Baal Keriah." This disturbed the latter, and he tried to stop the butcher by slapping hard on the almemar, but to no avail. The butcher still kept up his sing song while I was standing before the Torah. This was too much for the sexton who was the Baal Keriah, and giving a yelp he refused to go on any further and started running from the almemar. He changed his mind however, and went on. Later in the season this same sexton whom one would take for an ignoramus wrote me a letter of apology in beautiful Hebrew, that few, if any, of our Seminary graduates could even approach for excellence.

The Jews I came frequently in contact with during my stay in Long Branch were of the class I move among in New York, congregants of 85th Street Orach Chayim and 116th Street synagogue. They lived in cottages or stopped in strictly kosher hotels of which there are usually quite a few. Not as many, however, of our class of people are in the habit of going there as formerly. Many of them prefer Arverne, which they can reach from the city in about one third of the time. When I came out on casual visits four and five summers ago to Long Branch, I would go to the "minyan" on Sabbath day, which was held

in the large room of one of the kosher boarding houses. Each time I came there they asked me to speak. But as they were usually in a hurry to get through in the morning, I would deliver my sermon in the afternoon. In those years a movement was started to build a synagogue. They held a vaudeville entertainment four years ago, much to my disgust which I freely expressed to them the Sabbath preceding it, and realized a few hundred dollars. Not enough money was collected for a synagogue, and the matter was left over for the year following, when little progress was made. In the meantime the money which was entrusted to a gentleman who himself was dispoed to divert it to his own uses, partly melted away, and he was able to refund only about half.

Last year the "minyan" was held at the Vendome Hotel conducted ny a certain Bernstein. From the first services which were held on Shebuoth and for several Sabbaths thereafter, I made it my business to speak on the Sidrah for about fifteen minutes, taking care to lead up almost each time to the necessity of building a synagogue. Whether it was due to my constant urging or to the natural desire of those who were present to go ahead with their efforts to have a synagogue, meetings were held, and negotiations were entered into with the Reform congregation to buy its synagogue, known as the Beth Miriam on North Bath Avenue.

That synagogue has been in existence, I believe, for the last twenty years, if not more. The men and women have always worshipped there together, and when I attended services there when I was fifteen years old - which was eighteen years ago- they used the orthodox ritual and no organ. It is now completely reformed in these respects. Every Sabbath, some visiting Reform Rabbi addresses the congregation which usually fills the synagogue. The congregation is largely composed of the old type German Jews, who take as a rule very little interest in the larger problems of Jewish life, though they

could well afford to. As far as their children are concerned, I doubt whether they really care to be Jews or to be known as such.

It appears that the wealthier members of Beth Miriam were no longer satisfied with having their synagogue in Long Branch, and they wanted to move it to more fashionable grounds in West End. Our people got wind of it, and started negotiations for the purchase of the synagogue in Bath Avenue. A few of those who were anxious to get rid of it promised to sell it to our people, but wanted to be allowed to hold services until the end of the season. In the meantime we were to hold services there and have them over before 9:30 or ten when they started. Though a few of the old codgers on our side refused to have anything to do with the synagogue so long as the organ was still there, most of us grasped at the opportunity and held services on the Sabbath of the Sidrah Balak. I was even asked to make a few remarks and took as my text which I explained by pointing out that even as an , as a temporary mode of worship it is preferable to being at the mercies of hotel keepers. I also took a fling at the "hypers."

After the services one of the officials intimated that the transaction had not yet been consummated, and that the next meeting of the congregation would be held at which the proposition of selling the synagogue would be voted on. When the meeting was held they decided not to sell the synagogue. Some even took the opportunity of making some uncomplimentary remarks about the "Bollacks," their way of pronouncing the name "Pollacks."

When our people found that they had been turned down, they made up their minds to buy a plot of ground and to get some old building that might be moved over and turned into a synagogue. They acquired, accordingly, the lot on Second Avenue, corner North Bath, not far from the Temple Beth Miriam. This year they purchased the remains of some casino in West End. During this year they worshipped in the

ramshackel structure that stood on grounds stewn with ashes and cinders that looked like miniature mounds. The surroundings looked like after a fire. There I went most of the Sabbaths this year, and preached there four times.

To mention a few of the people that constituted this summer congregation, the two that stood out most conspicuously were the president, Mr. Garfinkle and the vice-president, Mr. Berg. I do not know them well enough to describe their mental or moral traits, but I shall note down some of the few characteristics external traits that may serve as an index of their personalities. Garfinkle is slim, medium sized, blonde bearded. Judging by the stoutness of his wife, she might be called his better three-quarters instead of his better half. He was born and bred in this country (his great-grandfather died a few years ago at the age of 112), speaks a perfect English, is in every sense Americanized, but in his religious views and conduct he is a literal translation of an old fashioned European Jew who is somewhat modernized. ~~xxxxxxx~~

Tuesday, September 15, 1914

Here is a bit of conversation he once had with me this summer. "When I was down south a few years ago in Atlanta," he said, "I found that the Rabbi of the synagogue to which my father belonged had introduced Friday night services which began at eight o'clock. When the Rabbi (who, by the way was a Dr. Goldberg, a graduate of the Seminary who has since died) came to visit my father I told him that he was acting contrary to orthodox practice in introducing late services. This provoked the rabbi to such a degree that he did not speak to me after that." Then he went on to say, "Now I see that he was right, after all. It's no use: the people cannot be gotten to attend the service at sundown. Most of them are still in their business places at the time, and if you will not provide a late service for them, they

will get used to not attending services at all." I know that this same Garfinkle is a director of the Montefiore Home, the directors of which are all Germans with the exception of three or four, who came from Russian Jewry. He together with the Unterbergs are responsible for whatever attempts are made in that Home to conform to the dietary laws. I srumise that the German Jews on the board look upon them as exception to the general type of Orthodox Jews.

The vice-president, Berg is of Jewish-German stock, a successful business man,, not a bad fellow by any means, but entirely uninterested in anything that does not concern his business, home and the congregation with which he is connected. The last represents to him the opportunity to exercise his social instinct. It is there that he wants to hold office: to be president or vice-president in the congregation is to him the pinnacle of social ambition. I understand that he severed his connection with the 85th Street congregation because they would not give him an office there. Another trait of his is his loyalty to the spiritual head of the congregation. Whomever he once acknowledges as the religious leader, he follows through thick and thin. He evidently belongs to those who are never so happy as when they have some one to look up to and to share the responsibility upon, for what they deem spiritual delinquencies. He never misses his prayers, but he is anxious to be through with them as soon as possible. He makes his boys attend synagogue but has no imagination for that aspect of religion which cannot be transmitted merely by enforced attendance. He is one of the c class that sets the tone to the German congregation of Orach Chayim, in spite of its being now largely overrun by the Russian and Austrian elements. These Jews are still of that unconscious type which is fast disappearing. He and perhaps his children can continue living an intensly Jewish life without ever giving a thought as to why and or spirit. They never open a Jewish book. This man, for instance,

uses up most of his leisure time in playing cards. In the trips made between New York and Long Branch, every moment is taken up with card playing. On the other hand, when he is at the synagogue, he does not stand on his vice-presidential dignity but acts as usher and shammos, gives every one a siddur and copy of the "chumesh," and to some also "talethim."

A third regular attendant was Mr. Fischel, my landlord in New York. Unlike the other two who are representative of more or less extensive groups, this man resembles no one but himself.

Wednesday, September 16, 1914

Yet the fact that he is a prominent figure in a section of New York Jewry seems to show that he has much in common with the people of that group. He came to this country about thirty years ago from a little town where he made his living as a carpenter. He must have been then about twenty. He married soon after his arrival as I have heard it said, a girl who made her living by doing housework. Abstractly speaking there would be no reason why one who works as a servant girl should not be capable of a certain amount of refinement when the opportunity to cultivate it presents itself. But in practice, such is seldom if ever the case. There is a certain vulgarity which belongs to that class that is ineradicable, or to put it differently, among Jews, and probably among Gentiles as well, only those of a rather vulgar disposition are inclined to do housework. The Fischels worked hard and lived miserly until they saved up a small capital, which he by reason of his shrewdness knew how to invest and began to reap therefrom considerable profit. Rumor has it that he engaged in some shady deals whereby he defrauded an employer of his who was a Gentile. He owes, however, his good fortune to the real estate boom hat prevailed in this city before 1905, and he happened to stop speculating just before the reaction set in, and values went down in a crash. He was estimated at that time

as being worth $600,000.00, though conservative figures placed him at half that amount.

But all this pertains to the externals of the man. But what of the man himself? He is built rather short with ill-shaped asually closely cropped head and a red goatee beard, topped by a thin long moustache. His nose is straight and heavy, somewhat reddish and veiny at times. His eyes murky and bloodshot. Thus on the whole, he would be quite repellent were it not for the animation in his face which betrays a mixture of shrewdness and intelligence. These traits show themselves in his aggressive attitude towards whatever he is brought in contact with. In spite of these qualities, however, he cannot live down the inordinate vulgarity which urges him on to elbow his way to the front, regardless of the ridicule which he provokes. When years ago, for example, a number of representative Jewish citizens called on the Mayer Mr. Low he made himself spokesman, inrespective of his broad and foreign accent and uncouth form in which he expressed what he had to say. His love of display and self-advertisement knows no bounds. While he has been identified with an extraordinary number of philantrhopic and educational societies, and gives quite freely to many a worthy cause, he makes sure that his generosity be cried from the house tops. It is characteristic of the man, that he explains his greed for publicity as a means of stimulating others to emulate his example. But all this would be forgiven him if he had been known to speak generally the truth. He is of the kind that find it easier to speak the untruth than the truth. It is this in particular that makes him at times unbearable to the more sedate and earnest among us. Both his vulgarity and untruthfulness will take the form for instance, of putting some cheap gilt brass bauble inhis house to pass off as a valuable gold ornament. Or he would offer to make repairs for a charitable institution, and charge twice the usual price in order to have an opportunity to display his generosity by reducing the bill to 50%.

For these and similar exploits gossip has him well known. As he is quite well known downtown among the actor folk, by reason of his ownership of a building that was used as a Jewish theatre, a playright took him a few years in a play on the Jewish stage known as "In the Mountains" in which he was spoken of as the "all-rightnik." The mountains referred to are the Catskills, to which many of our people resort during the summer. Fischel has a home in Hunter and there too he plays his part, whenever he stays there, in being forwardly and aggressively officious. He has contributed the synagogue building to the congregation that exists there, and, he therefore feels entitled to domineer over the local Jewish community. This naturally caused many an alteraction with the result that last year they made it so unpleasant for him and his wife that this year he preferred to summer with his family in Long Branch. In their fracas I am given to understand, his wife was more than an interested spectator.

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Friday, October 2, 1914

Among those who have applied for admission to the Teachers Institute was a young woman by the name of Emanuel who came to see me with her uncle of the same name. My reason for speaking of this applicant is that she was the occasion of my getting a slight glimpse into a colony of Jews with whom I had not come in contact so far. While she herself was able to converse with me in English, her uncle did most of the talking. He was a heavy set man of about forty odd years, full broad face, chin shaved, complexion sandy, resembling a type I at once associated with the Turkish peddlers who sell their wares in the country. He spoke in a broken English which resembled none of the broken English one is accustomed to from newly arrived Jews of Russia, Roumania, Austria or German. He explained that he was a Turkish Jew of the Sephardic caste who had come to this country about twenty three years ago. Since then he has been sending for various of his relatives who

live in different parts of Turkey, some in Constantinople, others in Jerusalem, and it was now seven weeks since her arrival. The young woman was a remarkable oriental type, coal black hair, parted in the middle and plastered down to her head with black eyes and pleasing face and small of stature. It was only when she rose to go and she discovered some malformation of her right hand, and a somewhat undersized stature with the result that she did not turn out as pleasing as she looked at first. She told me that she had received a thorough training in Jerusalem in the Evelinade Rotschild School where in addition to a training in modern languages she received a general Jewish education. In her case it meant the ability to speak and write Hebrew, a general knowledge of the Bible, History in Hebrew, Bialik's Agadah and Ein Jacob. She had also assisted in teaching aclass of small children.

I took this opportunity to learn something about the colony of Oriental Jews. Her uncle told me that there were about ten thousand of them. Most of them live on the lower east side, and are engaged in all forms of labor popular among the Jews, chiefly needle work. They keep up their identity with keen jealousy, not only as orientals but even as to their own home-towns. The sectional feeling among them which has somewhat mitigated during the last few years had been so strong that a Jerusalem Jew would refuse assistance to one from Sphath. This man who claimed that he was exempt from this narrow spirit, once had occasion to go around collecting for one of their number who had been reduced to sore straits, and the first question put to him was "Is he a Jersualemite or a Constantinople Jew?" and if the man did not happen to be one of the same town as the one appealed to he would be told that the townspeople of the poor man ought to help him out. I asked him about a man named Schinasi, who I heard was a Turkish Jew, and he replied that S. came to this country practically at the same time as he

did and was now worth many millions. In spite of his ~~ex~~ wealth, he does almost nothing for his countrymen. They want to seucre a Haham who might give them a feeling of community but they cannot get together a sufficient amount to maintain one. Most of them are extremely poor, earning from four to ten dollars a week, and the few who are in better circumstances are extremely hard fisted.

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Saturday, October 3, 1914

About a week before Rosh Hashono a young man came to me by the name of Harris. He told me that he had applied to be admitted to the Seminary, but that he would like to ask my advice before taking up his work there. Rubenowitz of Boston had given him a letter of introduction to me, in which the young man was referred to as a very able and earnest student. Looking at the young man I judged him to be between seventeen and eighteen but I learned later on that he was twenty-two. He is small and slim with his right hand misshapen as a result of injury received when he worked as a printer immediately after his arrival in this country. He has been here seven years. His father is dead and his mother is in Europe. He has some brothers and sisters in Boston who earn scanty livelihoods from hard work as tailors. The young fellow made his way into Harvard where he was able to pursue his studies by reason of having won a scholarship each year that he went there. He was graduated last June and got a BK key. When I learned these facts about him I thought to myself, that here was a desirable young fellow for the ministry, since in the face of great difficulty he had succeeded in passing through Harvard with honors. I was therefore extremely surprised to hear him ask me the question whether I thought he ought to study for the ministry, particularly now that he had already applied. But I soon gathered the reason for his hesitation when he began to give an analysis of his general inner makeup. Seldom have I heard a young fellow anatomize himself with such unsparing accuracy. He struck me as somewhat morbid and melancholiac. He dwelt at great length upon his syness, unsociability and by all means average powers of reasoning and memory. If he succeeded in passing with high marks it was due to his having "worked his head off" while at college. He never made any friends among his classmates. When I said to him that I could see no reason for his judging himself so

harshly and from what I could see he ought to impress favorably any one who met him, for the first time he replied that the impression passes away after the first time, and that people get to dislike him after they have learned to know him.

In reply to my question as to how he supported himself in Boston he told me that he taught in some Talmud Torah, where he not only had to teach but also to sweep the room, and make fire in the stove as well. I asked him how did he expect to maintain himself here. He answered that he thought he might get some opportunity to teach either in a school or as private tutor, and that he looked to me to recommend him to some position. I asked him about the possibility of getting a scholarship at the Seminary. "I spoke to Dr. Davidson about it," he said, "and he told me that all the available scholarships had been disposed of. As a matter of fact," he went on to say, "my experience with Dr. D. was a very unpleasant one. He made me feel as though I had come with the intention of relying upon the Seminary's bounty. I felt so cheap and miserable after my interview with him that I would have thrown myself before a car, if I had the courage." I laughed off his remarks and said to him that he was altogether too sensitive and that I hoped that that would not be a factor in determining him whether or not to go to the Seminary. He answered that he might decide not to take up the work for no other reason than that he would have to come in contact with Dr. D. whom he has learned to dislike. The very frankness with which he expressed his view of D. confirms what he said about himself and explains why he is an unsocial being. On the whole, he is about as perfect a product of our Golus life as one can expect to meet with under conditions such as obtain in our Jewish Ghettoes in America. But even more deplorable is the fact that a fellow like that who is downhearted, self-distrustful, pessimistic with little faith in men, should be allowed to pursue a course

preparatory to leadership which now the more than ever demands every possible faculty that makes for cheerfulness, courage and hope, that is in need of men of spiritual insight and energy which is only to be found among a few chosen ones. Jewish life is pitiable enough without having these mewling weaklings to burden it still more. But, unfortunately, the Seminary has been working in such a way as to weed out almost any man with strong character and individuality and to put a premium upon spiritual frailty. My heart aches whenever I think of what a tremendous organizing force in Jewry the Seminary could have been if its faculty had been made up of men to whom the future of Judaism and of the Jewish people would be of deep concern. I shall speak more at length when I shall have more time at my disposal.

An evidence of the extent to which the Seminary has become identified with everything that encourages weakness of character and little effort is seen in the three men of the special class which the Teachers Institute has been conducting for the last two and one half years who have asked my advice about joining the Seminary. The manner in which this special class was formed is due to influences set on foot in Jewish education by Dr. I. Benderly. When he first came to this city at the call of the Ahillah in the summer of 1910, he had the intention of calling to his assistance, for the purpose of conducting the preparatory schools which he was then about to organize, a number of young men who had come to this country at the ages between eighteen and twenty after having acquired a considerable Jewish training in the European Chedorim and Yeshibahs. Young men of this type were to be found in the Yeshiboth Elchanan which had been in existence in this city for about fifteen years, and where they study little else all day besides Gemara and Poskim, for which they get from three to four dollars a week, These young men Dr. B. expected to attact by offering to pay their way through college and giving them in addition some salary. From my acquaintance however with the general

run of these men, I had little faith in the scheme. On the other hand my interest in some of the city college men that year in order to induce them to organize a Menorah Society brought me into touch with two young men to whom I was strongly drawn by reason of their alert mental powers as well as the elements of personality that seemed to latent in them. These men were Dushkin and Berkson. The former happened to come to my house on a Friday evening. The former happened to come to my house on a Friday evening to consult me about a program for the Menorah Society. I took that opportunity to sound him as to what he expected to do after he graduated from college. He told me that he was himself uncertain but that in all likelihood he would follow up settlement work into which he had been drawn on account of his musical ability. His work, I believe, consisted of teaching music to some settlement group. At once I began to plead with him that a man like him who seemed to be interested in Jewish things ought not to waste his powers on so vague and unJewish an activity as settlement work. Forthwith I mentioned to him the new field that was being opened up with the establishment of the Bureau of Jewish Education; I argued that there was no reason why he could not make a career of Jewish work. I referred him to Dr. B. who then stayed, at that time in the Hotel on 123rd Street between B'way and Amsterdam Ave; and it was not long before Dushkin was given charge of a class in the Preparatory School which met then in the rooms of the YMHA.

In the wake of Dushkin followed Berkson.

Sunday, October 4, 1914

Both of these men took up the work with the Bureau not merely to earn a livelihood but also to satisfy their more ideal ambition of being of service to the Jewish people. But upon their heels followed a number of young men of the same class at college who were attracted by the material opportunities which the new field of Jewish education seemed to offer. They were given a chance to earn a few hundred dollars a

a year and to pursue post-graduate courses at Columbia. This was certainly more than they could hope for from the Board of Education of the City which had reduced men's initial salaries to the pitiable sum of $720. All of these men were formed into a group. Dr. B. himself taught them Hebrew for two hours every morning during an entire summer. He had them read modern Hebrew Literature and inculcated in them at the same time an enthusiasm for the general cause of Jewish education as he hoped to establish it. He also got a Dr. Shapiro to give them a more thorough grounding in grammar and composition. Later in the year about the middle of winter he asked me to give them some work and I took up with them the course in interpretation that I had been giving in the Institute to my regular classes. My work with that group did not constitute part of my duties at the Institute, but I carried it on for the Bureau. In June, 1912 that group was turned over by the Bureau to the Teachers Institute. The work with them was then divided between Dr. Friedlander and myself. He was to give them instruction in Bible and History and I was to give them the principles of Jewish education. I gave them that course until February, 1931 when I resumed once again the interpretation. Having concluded the book of Genesis with them last May (1914), I began with them the study of the Talmud.

In my heart of hearts I feel there is something wrong with the spirit that animates them in their work. I am not referring to their interest in it for what they can make out of it financially. Of that, I must say that there was till lately very little evidence. Even those who entered with materialistic aim also acquired somewhat of a higher point of view. Whether it was sincere with them or not is of course hard to say. But the mere fact that a sense of "noblesse oblige" developed among them which shamed into silence any purely selfish pretensions is to me strong proof of the idealism

animating Dr. B. himself. All this afforded me keen satisfaction. But what I could never get myself accustomed to in those men has been their attitude towards Judaism. It was, of course, the reflection of Dr. B's. attitude which in turn is that of Achad Haam. I might, in fact say, that Dr. B is perhaps the only man who is working out Achad Haamism in Golus in a systematic and organized way. I had always missed something in Achad Haam's conceptions of Judaism, but certainly its realization in practice I have always found jarring to me. It is wanting in appreciation of the indefinable religious longings and aspirations. It borders so closely on the clap trap soulless ~~and~~ practical efficiency schemes that Carlyle so vehemently condmns in his "Signs of the Times." It is this spirit that has taken possession of the men and I have found them strange, unresponsive to the deeper appeals of Judaism, so that I have often wished that these men were drawn into the seminary, where, while the religious spirit is lacking, it is at least not pooh-poohed, as is the case in nationalistic circles. What a boon it would have been if the strongest men among them had seen that the only logical step for them to take was to combine the rabbinate with the function of the educator. The whole scheme of Dr. B I believe is based upon a fallacy, viz., that it is feasible to maintain distinct Jewish groups in the Diaspora, that shall unite in themselves two coordinate cultures of a national character. In my opinion this can not possibly be realized. It can only have a short lived existence among the recently arrived immigrants and in their children, but not in the third generation. Only by giving Jewish culture a distinctively religious significance in the true modern sense of the term is there any hope of Jewish education being built up in this country. This means that only by maintaining the synagogue and vitalizing it by means of the Hebraic movement can the Jews hope to survive here as a distinct group. Only these, therefore, who will give religious interpretation to Jewish culture will be entrusted with the care and

supervision of Jewish education. The Talmud Torah system which is independent of the synagogue is only transitory and will in time disappear before the religious school system to be established by congregations. The abnormality which makes the T.T. system untenable is its eleemosynary character. It is maintained by the well to do for the children of the poor. There have so far been no schools of any account established by well to do parents for their own children. It is only when conservative congregations are aroused to the need of establishing properly organized religious schools that the normal condition of self-support will be attained in Jewish education. This being the case it would have been wise for Dr. B. to induce his men to join the Seminary and become rabbis as well as educators. Instead of this he urges them to work for the Doctors' Degree in Columbia, expecting that when one of them will swoop down on an out of town Jewish community as Dr. So and So, the Jewish populace will be so overwhelmed that he will have no difficulty in carrying out his educational plans. This sounds well in theory but I do not think feasible in practice. This tendency in the Bureau which I do not find to my liking is probably the main reason for the bitter antagonism which exists between Dr. Schechter and Dr. Benderly. What to me is only jarring is to Dr. S. hateful and offensive. This accounts for their inability ever to get together. With a tendency such as this for an issue the difference is bound to be one that is rooted in temperament and therefore one which can hardly be overcome. The reason I can work with Dr. B. is probably because I am young and can adapt myself to what I see to be the need of the hour. For the time being he is to me the most positive force in Jewish life today. If I had any one else more like minded to turn to and cooperate with I would never have much to do with Dr. B. If for example I had found in Schechter a man who possessed a degree of efficiency that would assure general recognition for his point of view I would have surrendered myself heart and soul

Benderly & Schechter

to him. But in my eagerness to live at least not as a parasite, and to do some constructive work in Jewish life, I have found Dr. B. the only man who could assist me.

But instead of the stronger men in that group turning to the ministry, the weaker men, weaker both in character and mentality, have grown displeased with their prospects in the Bureau, and have applied to me for advice with regard to entering the Seminary. This means that the rabbinate which is the only feasible form of effective Jewish spiritual leadership is to be in the hands of weaklings, while the better and stronger men who might have joined it, if not for the misguided fanatical tendency of Jewish nationalism, are doomed to become mere cogs in philanthropic educational machinery.

Two weeks ago to-day was the eve of Rosh Hashono. For the first time in eleven years I passed the high holidays without preaching anywhere. This had a very depressing effect upon me. It brought home to me that sense that there was no room for me in the only aspect of Jewish life that I look upon as having a future, namely the religious. I owe it probably to circumstances that I am an observant Jew, though in my beliefs I am a ~~thoroughly~~ thoroughgoing radical. Otherwise I should have landed in the Reform movement. What is peculiar about my mode of life is that I do not hide my radical views from anyone; I state them freely to superiors, colleagues and students. My radicalism is, however, not of the usual kind, since it only relates to the outward forms of religion, not to the fact of religion itself. I often feel particularly embittered because I am not able to give full vent to the enthusiasm for vital religion on account of the shackles which the outward forms and institutions impose upon me. This is the reason I refused the pulpit of 85th Street Congregation when it was offered to me last year by a committee of fifteen sent by the congregation to interview me. I have felt all along that orthodoxy

Refuses K.S. pulpit 1913

is the bane of Judaism. The only hope for Judaism is in the introduction of radical and sweeping changes to be made from the point of view of what Schechter has termed Catholic Israel. Still I had not the courage to tell them that I was not orthodox, but I proposed to them a condition that I knew they could not accept because Hyman was one of them, and he bossed them. The condition was that the congregation join the United Synagogue. ~~Txxxx~~ They would not hear of it, and our negotiations broke off. In order to make sure that I would not be tempted to accept the pulpit once again I forced myself to urge upon them to appoint Herbert Goldstein, one of the Seminary students that was to be graduated from the Seminary last June, as principal and preacher until they could elect him as rabbi after he would be graduated from the Seminary.

I say "I forced myself" because if there was ever a man at the Seminary not to my liking it was Herbert Goldstein. He is to me the embodiment of all that I hate in narrow minded and bigoted orthodoxy. He is not insincere. Were he that I would have spurned him completely. But if he is both sincere and orthodox it is due to his puny intellect. The man has no ideas and no originality. He possesses a good deal of religiosity but very little sense of honesty. Plagiarizing others' thoughts and presenting them as his own is an ordinary procedure with him. In his inaugural address he embodied almost the whole of a sermon by Hugh Black. I must say, however, in ~~expatiation~~ extenuation, that he has not a sufficiently developed conscience to feel that what he did is wrong. Yet I suppose he will be the first to denounce dishonest methods in business. His feeble intellect prevents him from realizing the paradox. What will probably aggravate his insensibility is his connection with the Fischels whose son-in-law, it is rumored, he will become. This same man had the audacity to denounce me more than two years ago that I was teaching irreligion and even made me a butt of

his attack in one of the sermons that he preached in the Seminary while still a student. In that sermon he also lectured the students for d ring to sing Hebrew national songs without wearing their hats. When Dr. Schechter suggested to me that I prohibit his preaching the sermon I replied that I did not care to make a martyr of him. But while I heartily disliked him, I could not but realize that he was the only one of the Seminary graduates who had a right to go into that pulpit since nearly all of them are not only radical in their beliefs but have not even the redeeming feature of being honest about their radicalism. When I saw that the congregation was going to ruin for want of a young man to lead it I got myself to urge upon this same Hyman the imperative need of taking Goldstein. He has now been acting as their rabbi since last Passover.

It was at his invitation that I gave the address in ceremonies on February 25 of which I give a summary on page 54. His conduct that evening was both childish and insolent. He wanted to force me into the admission that I do not accept the traditional conception of revelation and he seemed intent upon proving to his congrggants that I was a heretic. I was non-committal and easily exposed the weakness of his questionings and arguments, but most of these present resented his conduct and attitude towards me. I suppose I am prejudiced but it appears to mé that if any one had treated a friend of mine ~~xxxx~~ the way he treated me that night I would look upon him as incompetent to be a spiritual leader without the promise of development. Yet my friends think it perfectly natural for G. to assume the authority that goes with spiritual leadership. To what shall I attribute this if not to the lack of taste, judgement and consideration among the vast bulk of the people who make up our orthodox congregations. For this reason alone, I should be glad that I am not in the ministry, but then I say to myself if people were what they should be there would be nothing

for the minister to do. And I inwardly castigate myself for such wholesale condemnation of what is after all God's people. What right have I to be any kind of a teacher, or have anything to do with teaching others to preach if I can not discern the germ of goodness and genuine worth beneath the rough and uncouth exterior of my brethren and sisters. So I live, torn between what I feel, and what I know I ought to feel, a by no means happy existence.

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Saturday, October 10, 1914

The Seminary had been scheduled to open on Thursday, October 1. This does not mean that work was to commence and sessions to be resumed. The opening is a mere formality carried out in order that the Seminary go not on record as having commenced work considerably later in the season that the colleges and universities. Of course, the holidays interfere a great deal, and it would not be feasible to enforce attendance at this time, but could not provision be made to reduce somewhat the term of inactivity at the Seminary which lasts from May 15th to October 15th? The trouble is that the leading men on the faculty regard their own scholarly work of more importance than giving instruction, which they look upon as a waste of time as far as they are concerned, and which they therefore restrict to as few hours as possible. The consequence is not only that the classes are undivided except into the two divisions -- by far too few -- in the case of Talmud instruction, and men of fourth year standing are made to do the same work as men who have recently entered, but the amount of instruction received in about half of what it should be. The men on the staff do not show the least desire to give themselves freely to the students if it is to be at the least sacrifice of time, and if it is liable to impair in the least the chance of writing some dry-as-dust article on some minute point in Jewish Science. I hold Jewish Science in proper respect, but

I would not permit any but those who are crippled and maimed to pursue it, and I would compel men like Ginsberg, Davidson and Friedlander, who are men of brains to help build up a living Judaism with content to it.

This time Dr. Schechter was not present at the opening exercises. He took very sick the Saturday preceding and was operated on for appendicitis on Monday night. This made it necessary for Prof. Ginzberg to make the opening remarks. We gathered in the chapel about 4:30. The students who came were only half the number of those actually enrolled. Somehow or other they make a more miserable appearance on that day than at any time during the academic year. My heart sinks within me as I see them sitting lack-a-daisically, many of them unkempt, weak and pale with their clothing hanging loosely on them. When Mincha was over, Ginsberg went up to the Almemar, and taking out some papers from his pocket he read mechanically what he had to say. It took him altogether about seven minutes to get through with the manuscript. The thoughts were by no means so striking, nor was the language so choice as to make the use of a manuscript indispensable. It only goes to show what lack of zeal and fervor prevails at the Seminary that a man like Ginsberg should be able to speak for seven or eight minutes as man to man on so sacred a calling as that for which the students are preparing themselves. Furthermore, almost every word of what he said -- with the exception of the allusion to Dr. Schechter in the emphasis upon and interpretation of [illegible] -- I remember to have heard from Dr. Schechter himself on one of the preceding openings. Possibly, Dr. Ginsberg asked the secretary to furnish him with one of Dr. Schechter's addresses, and he merely read it off. Anyhow, the following omission is characteristic. In speaking of their studies he referred especially to the Bible and Talmud, and alluded to the other courses, but made not the slightest mention of the importance of attending to the work that was to help them to become preachers. There is